

WITHDRAWN

REDWOOD LIBRARY

NEWPORT, R. I.

LOVE DAYS

[SUSANNA MOORE'S]

Also by Henrie Waste

PHILOSOPHY:

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL FRAGMENT

LOVE DAYS

[SUSANNA MOORE'S]

by

HENRIE
WASTE



REDWOOD LIBRARY
NEWPORT, R. I.

NEW YORK
ALFRED · A · KNOPF

1923

COPYRIGHT, 1923, BY ALFRED A. KNOPF, INC.

Published August, 1923

JUN 28 1924

bW

W28851


Set up and printed by the Vail-Ballou Co., Binghamton, N. Y.

Paper furnished by W. F. Etherington & Co., New York.

Bound by the H. Wolff Estate, New York.

MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

For
E. S.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024

AFTER a hasty breakfast, of which she remembered nothing but that she had eaten it, Susanna found herself on the street car bound for college.

She had indeed been dimly aware of the states through which she had passed up to the time of her presence in the car; had known that getting out of bed felt cold and premature; that bathing felt pleasurable hot; that her hair fixed itself becomingly this morning, and that she looked well in the mirror over the dressing table. But her only fully conscious moments, when thoughts and sensations met in focused attention, were those spent before that other mirror situated in the recesses of the right hand corner of her dressing-room which a shaft of light, penetrating from the bedroom, struck, and partially illumined.

For in this mirror Susanna suddenly became beautiful. But it was not because she became beautiful that Susanna contemplated herself with sharp attention, it was because unhappily she suspected that in beautifying her this enchanted mirror had coincidently transformed her into some one totally unlike herself.

She suspected—: she was not certain; in spite of her eighteen years of life, and the very pronounced interest she took in her appearance, she had in truth only the faintest idea of what “she looked like.” And in critically illumined moments she knew that she did not know how she really looked, and it disturbed her deeply.— It even disconcerted her to remember what had occurred not long ago, one evening, when she was sitting out a dance with Mr. Whitney, who admired her, and whose admiration, flowing from so difficult a source, flattered her.

To this source of admiration, then, reputedly run dry through years of wasted sentimental experience, she had à propos of some compliment boldly remarked: “Oh, I know that my face isn’t regular; it’s only interesting.”

“But you’re quite mistaken, Miss Susanna,” the oldish lived-out-to-the-point-of-being-devoid-of-tact Mr. Whitney, aged thirty-three, had replied, with a flicker in his fishy eye; “your features are quite perfectly regular, and your countenance is entirely charming, but not, as yet, unusually interesting.”

Love Days

Indeed, whenever Susanna recalled this conversational occurrence, or, more accurately put, whenever this occurrence recalled itself to Susanna, as it did with unpleasant persistency, and preferably at this mirror, bringing a blush along with it posthumously as it were,—Susanna wondered whether she had deserved to have this upsetting liberty taken by Mr. Whitney. Deserved it for having been so very personal herself. . . . For, in accordance with what were generally held to be purely-social-intercourse-manners, she had of course transgressed; she had not, of course, conformed to the standards implicit in conversations ending abruptly with “oh, if you are going to be personal, we had better change the subject.” But, in accordance with her own feelings it was quite as natural and quite as fascinating to jump into a personal conversation as for a child to play with fire. . . . And in regard to the resultant burn, Susanna felt doubtful whether she would have known it to be an unpleasant pain if she had not so insistently been told so,—because, really, in feeling, it was rather a pleasant pain.

Thus, gazing into the mirror situated in the shadows, in which she became so dramatically beautiful a creature in the style of a chiaroscuro photograph, Susanna’s thoughts, feelings and sensations fused in a moment of full and complex consciousness. It contained not only her unhappy suspicion that she was decidedly less goodlooking than this strange simulacrum,—it contained not only the frustrated wish to know just how goodlooking she really was, and how goodlooking a, b, and c thought her, but it crystallized finally into a sharp worry lest her looks and her character did not sufficiently match one another. . . . She suddenly feared that this physical type of hers, which she found so difficult to realize, might somehow restrict her spiritual development within its own limits, as a frame limits and delimits its picture.

And how—Susanna reflected uneasily—could she or anyone else realize and define a type which from the front view was one, and from the side view another. . . . As now, for instance, she viewed herself in this mirror, she saw an oval the colour of pale ivory, an aureole of shining copper hair, wide open serious grey eyes with straight brows that rose a little at the inner ends, bow-shaped, full but compressed lips, an ordinary straight nose;—in combination an even, regular, almost classical face, a face a little

Susanna Moore's

like a passport face, she thought,—but she thought it very low, so to say, because she instinctively disliked the strange self-face to overhear these critical thoughts that had a way of obtruding themselves without her permission. . . . On the other hand—she reflected—looked at from the side, this baffling but beloved face was totally changed. The oval became pointed; the nose springy and uplifted; the lips developed dimpled corners; the eyes were chiefly lashes, and the general air was that of frivolity. . . . And when she smiled! . . . Oh, she gave it up, this getting a whole out of incongruous aspects! She would simply adopt the full face and ignore the rest, which wasn't there anyway unless one arranged the mirrors in a certain way, an operation that took time; and time was her most precious possession. . . .

And after all, Susanna concluded for the time being, with an expression that made her full face match her side face exactly, one thing was certain: she was goodlooking enough for all practical purposes, and far better looking than most people; and if it should turn out that she was in any way very wonderful looking, so much the better; and if it didn't, and she wasn't, why then it was just as well not to know it now!

And as for that other matter, the matter of being personal,—even though it entailed some embarrassment, and some real and potential blushes, wasn't finding things out worth these discomforts—supposing them to be discomforts and not merely an exciting game? Might it not indeed be one's duty to be personal as a means to knowledge?

Yes, it may be my duty to be extremely personal and direct in my dealings with my fellow men, Susanna told herself, lingering on the "may." For she liked the mood "may": finality was distasteful to her. Finality, she thought, definitely closed paths and thereby ended that doubt whence sprang inquiry, knowledge, and freedom,—as Dewey and Descartes put it for her in a more systematized region of the mind. . . . But with "may" and its vision of infinite possibilities stretching in all directions, her own chances of spiritual becoming multiplied into infinity. . . .

And having smiled expectantly at her more limited and stationary self, and having clasped an amber chain under the chin that was round in the full view and pointed in the side, she had turned herself and her thoughts from the mirror.

Love Days

Susanna hung to a strap in the crowded car, and critically surveyed the seated crowd spreading just below, from which no one had separated and individualized himself by giving her a seat. Yet several of the men were young and fat and perfectly fitted for the performance of such an act. They think I'm a schoolgirl, Susanna observed to herself, pursing her lips into what she conceived to be a subtle sarcastic sneer, and squeezing a little the Aristotle she carried under her arm together with Kidding's Sociology and a volume of Morley. And feeling pleasantly misunderstood and undervalued and hence a shade romantic, she carried her sarcastic-feeling and naïve-looking stare from one to the other of these strange people, of whom but one thing seemed conclusively certain: that they wished to remain seated.

There were among them—she thought to see—worried nervous little women, gazing into the past or into the future,—absent from the present at any rate; there were apathetic stout ones, fully occupied with just sitting there; there were elderly men concealed somewhere back of beards, eyeglasses and newspapers; middle-aged clean-shaven ones whose minds were in their offices and whose persons were travelling there a little more slowly; and then there were those who like herself were young. Yet even these were not alert and alive to the moment, to its complexity and fulness. . . . Even they, thought Susanna, are not concrete. Yes, that is it, that is the solution of these dumb and deadish human beings and their lack of expression: they are at present, when in isolation and unoccupied, not so much abstracted, as really abstract. They possess the faculties of thinking and feeling,—but latently, as it were, that is to say, they are potentially individuals, but actually nothing individual is happening to them, or in them, or through their agency. Hence, actually, each is only in so far an individual as he partakes of the general concept—the idea—of humanity.

Susanna was pleased, quite charmed, in fact, with this Platonically flavoured analysis. What, she wondered, would Dr. Miller of Philosophy 4., or Dr. Duke have thought of it. . . . And her lips parted sweetly in a smile of imagined satisfaction, and her eyes grew large and bright with a warm flame just when, in their progressive survey, they alighted on a remote passenger, one of the suitable, stout young men. And here in the wide, welcoming

Susanna Moore's

and inviting smile of his response their flame was instantly and definitely extinguished.

Withdrawing her offended eyes into her head, as it were, Susanna moved bodily away, as far as possible, from contact with this experience. She frowned; her lips compressed themselves; her chin lifted: indignation filled her. How dared he . . . how loathsome were these cars . . . why didn't Auntie have a motor anyway instead of those lazy horses, she would have to sooner or later—: this was all that formulated itself in her mind, while her feelings registered nothing more definite than impatience and resentment. Yet, all of a sudden everything had changed for her.— She now sensed a chaos of new things—: coughs and yawns and snorts and sighs and stampings and scrapings and the clanging of the bell and the voices of the people and the smell of their various perfumes and their various dampnesses. . . . She now felt the heat and the cold of the opening and closing of the door, and the stuffiness of the air, and the touch of the clothed bodies that brushed against her. She now felt tightly encompassed—almost smothered—by surrounding happenings.

Things were no longer dead or even abstract.— Susanna could think no more until she had left that car.

Arrived at the haven of college, she found that she was late for Greek 2. with Dr. Duke, one of her many favourite hours. The cloakroom in which she divested herself of her hat, coat, and umbrella, was empty save for Miss Smith, who was doing the same.

"Goodmorning," said Miss Smith. "It's quite a cool morning, isn't it?"

"Yes; especially coming in from Newark, I should imagine," Susanna agreed sympathetically.

"New Rochelle," Miss Smith rejoined with a leniently corrective air.

"Mn . . . of course New Rochelle, New Rochelle," came self-deprecatingly from Susanna together with a slight blush. But, she told herself, there was no sense in blushing; it would be far more sensible to remember not to venture on these geographical guesses, when nine times out of ten she guessed wrong. Certainly she had no intuition about this. . . . Although she knew Newark and New Rochelle and Nyack apart, and Miss Smith and

Love Days

Miss Morris and Miss Jones, she did not know their combinations: she couldn't remember them, and that was all there was about it, and it was time she admitted it—to herself. . . . And after all, how could she or anyone else know them, unless one memorized and practiced them constantly—except the Misses Jones and Morris and Smith themselves.— Susanna dimpled and almost giggled as this occurred to her.

Dr. Duke and "Medea" were occupying the class's attention when the girls entered, and, although entering quietly, created a splash of noise in the deep silence that at the moment prevailed. For the class had just before come upon a very unusual use of a word, and Dr. Duke was now engaged in searching in the recesses of his memory for the one or two similar cases known to Greek philology. He was doing this, as was his wont, in complete absorption and silence, and the class was absorbedly and silently watching him.

To Susanna these long vacuums were among the most attractive moments of the entire hour, because, for one thing, Dr. Duke was extremely agreeable to watch, and also because doing so was a performance which required no previous preparation at home. And yet, as it sometimes happened that Dr. Duke would emerge from these deep reminiscent trances without having brought the fish of his subconscious stores of knowledge to the surface, and as in such an eventuality it was his practice to pounce on a student with a totally irrelevant question, there was present even in these moments of tranquillity an exciting element of danger.

Susanna settled down to a comfortable view of Dr. Duke's classic blond head with its cold and concealing glance. She viewed it with the eyes of youth that find so much to charm and mystify them on the object's surface because some protective instinct of shyness inhibits their further research. And as she viewed the cold blond mask of this distinguished scholar who condescended to tell them things about the Greek language—things whose sparse interest was tenfold enhanced by the source whence they issued—, there arose in Susanna a tremendous satisfaction in knowing herself his favourite pupil. She also knew, it was true, that his preference for her was based solely on her superior Greek accent and on her bold and occasionally successful manipulation of "mèn" and "dé," but this seemed to her an ideally

Susanna Moore's

suitable basis. And on occasions like this—other occasions being crowded with their own dreams and fancies—she dreamed happily of a further development of her relation to him. She previsioned, as a first step, some stunningly perfect performance of translation at the blackboard, while, shining in the distance, far away, some marvellous philological discovery such as a single case of the unquestionable use of a term, refuting a thousand pages of tedious German commentary, constituted an ultimate ascension, as it were, leading to perfect union with him.

"His wife must have let him go without straightening his tie this morning," Miss Fox, the humorist of the class, whispered to Susanna.

Susanna stared at Miss Fox and then at the tie: and all of a sudden the world became confused and noisy again, and Mrs. Duke, who before this had been but a name in a nominalistic sense, became a disagreeably reality affecting the pure completeness of Dr. Duke as the introduction of soap, for instance, affects the purity of H_2O . And unpleasantly conscious that henceforth Dr. Duke would never again be entirely present, but that some of him would always still be at home, in some definite if unknown place, having his tie straightened by a definite if unknown Mrs. Duke, who might do other and still more unpleasantly intimate things with him, Susanna felt the blood mounting to her cheeks, driven by an emotion compounded of shock, of discomfort, and of apprehension lest Dr. Duke had been completely spoiled for her by Miss Fox,—the while her eyes were fixed, unseeing, on the uncensored tie—

"This is the second time I am requesting you to be good enough to read the next lines, Miss Moore," came to her in Dr. Duke's coolest and most sarcastic tones together with a nudge from Miss Fox.

"Pardon me, I had not heard—"

"That, Miss Moore, was entirely apparent."

"I'm very sorry, Dr. Duke. 'Heart on fire with madness, you left your father's house to sail the sea, past the deep's twin rocks, to dwell in a foreign land whence now you are driven husbandless . . .'"

And having got through a performance of reading, translating and commenting upon thirty lines of Euripides, highly creditable to her power of concentration, safe now from further interrup-

Love Days

tion, Susanna turned her attention again to events more recent.

The sun, she saw, was entering through the windows in a tentative way, picking a girl here and there to illumine and make vivid. Picking them from a mass of homogeneous monotonous units, she thought, noting again the similarity of their drab clothes, of their headdresses, of the inflection of their indistinguishable voices that hailed for the most part from the indistinguishable environs of New York. A flat mass, she reflected, with a vivid individual jumping from it every here and there, much as at the present moment various individuals were doing through the agency of the sun. But, she lazily noted, the sun was not choosing the same persons on whom her own selective friendship bestowed distinction. . . . And her eyes dwelt comfortably and musingly on these four or five beings who were her friends, as they also dwelt musingly and comfortably on all those others who were not. . . . On Miss Stuart, a mature person who led the class smilingly in all its practical activities and smilingly partook of Medea's tragedy; on Miss Shephard, who, gaily gowned by Paquin, sat in rigid absorption, acknowledging the reception of the information that was being poured into her delicate frowning head by nodding it continually and mechanically, like a porcelain Buddha; on Miss Willett, whose gold and pink prettiness dissolved into tears after every encounter with mathematics, and hardened into autocratic tyranny in the realm of parliamentary proceedings. . . . Susanna dwelt on these mysterious realities comfortably, for was not the world full of other things that were both comprehensible and deep, and full of things so beautiful that they needed no comprehension to be enjoyed. . . . And was not mystery itself wonderful and fascinating when it lay outside you—like this—and made no difference. . . .

The intermission preceding English 3. was filled for Susanna with short-lived movements: little walks in the corridors, good-mornings, inquiries, embraces from her friends. It was apparent that in spite of her eighteen years and the distant starriness of her eyes Susanna was somewhat of a pet, and it was apparent that she liked it. And yet, although she liked it, although, indeed, she loved sweet flashes of affection from the eyes of those sympathetic to her, and squeezes of affection from generous arms, and the playful tones of voices modulated by their direction and

Susanna Moore's

goal, it was equally certain that she could nevertheless not bask quite carelessly in these caresses—: her enjoyment was too often just a shade diminished by some inchoate feeling that it was unbeautiful to accept more than one was willing to return,—or, at least, willing to continue to ask for.

English 3.—composition—was her orgiastic hour in the collegiate mysteries. Not only because she worshipped fervently at the shrine of Calliope and her sister Muses, but also, and chiefly, because of the so very satisfying nature of the presiding priest, Professor Taylor. The Professor Taylor who not long since had come to the University from an even greater one, bathed in the magnetic fluid of a brilliant reputation; the Professor Taylor who, in the first of the series of personal interviews in which it was his practice to criticize compositions previously submitted, had pronounced her, Susanna, the class's literary star; the Professor Taylor who, following up his convictions, had publicly installed her as star by reading the evidence of her qualification to the class, and himself attesting to its conclusiveness in fits of laughter and prolonged chortles. And the fact that the only member of the audience to share his amusement to any marked degree was herself interfered neither with the establishment of her literary fame nor with her enjoyment of it.

So it was pure unadulterated pleasure to walk into Dr. Taylor's presence, and, en route, to wonder what subtleties of encouragement that astute teacher would presently hand out. And today Susanna's wildest dreams could not have previsioned the reality. For after come critical observations on her week's daily themes, Dr. Taylor had remarked as abruptly as his smooth manner permitted: "With your power to touch on things lightly yet poignantly, Miss Moore, I expect you to write us another *Trilby*—some day."

"Oh," ejaculated Miss Moore, to whom anything unexpectedly expected of her always came with a slight shock, and who was slow at reassembling herself after such an impact.

"Yes," continued Dr. Taylor in his whimsical, kindly fashion. "You have read *Trilby*, I suppose? You remember it?"

Pause.

"Du Maurier," Susanna roused herself at length to state,—feeling nevertheless that Du Maurier was spiritually as remote from her as Napoleon or Solon, "Du Maurier, besides his play-

Love Days

ful fancy, had a knowledge of life, and—and understood what he knew,—” she ended vaguely.

“And so will you some day.”

“Do you really think so?” she rejoined naïvely. “I’m not sure. . . .”

“Why not?”

“I don’t know,” Susanna looked into space, blushing faintly. “I find it very difficult so far.”

“You’re not afraid of life?” from Dr. Taylor, looking intensely if impersonally interested.

“Afraid?” from Susanna wonderingly. “You see, I don’t even know what there is to be afraid of. . . . It’s rather—: there’s too much of life; too much at one time; too much all the time, and too little connection. . . . One seems to have the choice of losing a lot of it, or—or—” she hesitated, feeling that she was getting beyond the depths of her actual thoughts—“of losing one’s self. . . I’ll think of Trilby,—my Trilby,” she hurried on, smiling politely, “and thank-you.” And she left the room precipitously, without having been dismissed.

Afraid of life—what could he mean! How annoying to have personal things flung at you; things for which you had no reception because you had never met with them before. . . . But, she pondered, why had she then run away from Dr. Taylor and his conversation? Was she perhaps afraid of having further questions asked of her, requiring further difficult, half-baked answers on her part? Very likely, Susanna admitted, because certainly she was aware of a distaste for self-examination, and a desire to push these deep probing thoughts aside,—and if so, why? she interrogated herself.

Well, for one thing, she told herself with conviction, she lacked the time for really serious probing into herself and into this life that stretched away in all directions. Even if the other conditions—interest and objectivity—were fulfilled, she had not the time! Her days and hours and moments were all filled with happenings, new happenings all the time; and the interstices between happenings were packed with their reverberating over and undertones. Of course—: that was just it, that was what she had said: life was too full to be comprehended, too full even to give you the time to comprehend—at your leisure, independently, for yourself, so to say. . . .

Susanna Moore's

Du Maurier and she—how absurd! She had no more in common with him than with Bismarck, or Solon, or Abraham—a lot of old men; great old men, of course, but old, and men. . . . Yet the imputation was flattering, somehow, and she went about for some time with a bright and airy elation somewhere on the surface of her feelings, and a habit of saying to herself at intervals: “Trilby—Du Maurier,” and dimpling with amused gratification.

Lectures, study-hours and luncheon over, Susanna declined the transportation proposals of various friends, promised Blanche Thayer to drop in on her way home to prepare Greek with her, and proceeded to walk down Riverside Drive alone.

The afternoon had turned blue and hazy, and everything still glittered in the morning's wetness. And Susanna, who meant to devote her solitary walk to memories of the million occurrences of the last forty-eight hours, terminating with Mrs. Duke and Trilby, started her mental activities by becoming completely absorbed in the air that scintillated with soft light, in the blue of the placid river, the veiled perpendicularity of the Palisades and the molten gold of that part of the sky one couldn't look at for blinking. Or, perhaps she was not quite absorbed, for while she breathed the physical scene into her consciousness, her memories floated by, perceived but uncaught, like clouds on a distant horizon.

Encompassed, thus, in the well-being of the long moment, she reached Blanche's home, a place she never entered without a slight emotion.

Blanche was the only child of an invalid mother and a busy, but unsuccessfully busy, father. The tasks of keeping the household going and the family happy were thus added for her to the task of working hard to fit herself for self-support. Yet her straight back was unbent, and the gay sprightliness that indicated that were her vitality less heavily harnessed it would lead her far into creating a life of her own was undiminished. And Susanna liked her for her flaxen hair and the sparse slim squareness that expressed her dependableness, and she liked her for her effervescent spirits and her pretty humour. But she admired her, enormously, for the courage of her self-abnegation; and the cheerfulness with which she made her perpetual sacrifice assumed in

Love Days

Susanna's eyes the proportions of the heroic, nay, of the miraculous. Was it, she sometimes wondered, an interested destiny that had presented this spectacle to her consideration to allow her to realize how singularly free she, Susanna, happened to be from the coercion of external circumstance? How free to follow her own will, her preferences,—herself, in a word. In a moment of sudden illumination it had indeed occurred to her that she was in comparison to almost any other girl what an object isolated in a laboratory was to the same object in function—: one, namely, behaving under circumstances as favourable as possible for the discovery of its essential nature. She had felt that she, more than any one she knew, did as she liked, as she inclined; that she was more self-expressing and whole when she moved. If ever she achieved the goodness Blanche every day exhibited it would be, she thought, as Francis of Assisi or Tolstoi achieved it: goodness would suddenly and spontaneously break out of her nature, and suffuse the whole. . . .

So she embraced Blanche warmly, and felt happy in the atmosphere of admired goodness, and happy in preparing the Greek which had a very special appeal for her, irrespective even of Dr. Duke's classic mask.

"Susanna," said Blanche in one of the pauses, while Susanna was looking things up in the dictionary, "Dr. Taylor said something rather wonderful about you to me. He said he expected you to write another *Trilby*."

"Yes, he told me so." Susanna let the dictionary drop and blushed. "Well, it's all in the lap of the Gods. I may—" she dimpled; "or I may write a better book than *Trilby*—" she giggled; "or I may write a very different book from *Trilby*—" she elevated her eyebrows, still laughing; "or I may—"

"Get married to one of your swains and settle down to a humdrum life and talk about your brilliant prospects to your children," Blanche interrupted with a laugh and a sigh.

"No," Susanna said in her languid way that never sounded final, but often was.— Whenever her potential motherhood, marriage or death were touched on in conversation she felt as though some one else were being referred to, and the chief emotion produced in her was one of estrangement from the speaker who so unpleasantly identified her with that other person. . . . "Let's go on with *Medea*. She got married and didn't settle down to

Susanna Moore's

a hum-drum existence," she remarked, feeling much closer to Medea at this moment than to Blanche.

The dictionary was reopened, and the rest of the world shut out.

Susanna entered her own room at tea time, and found tea awaiting her on the tea table before the hearth in which, to be sure, nothing—not even a gas-log—was at home. Tea served in her own room meant that her aunt was out, for when she was in it was agreed that Susanna should devote this short hour to her.

Her room was a conventional one, a thing of cretonne and taffeta; cheerful, tidy, and without specific character. Her desk and books filled the window-half completely, and the other half was dedicated to her spacious bed and her dressing table. The latter was laden with a regulation silver toilet set of ugly French design and photographs in silver frames of another ugly French design. Two of these were pictures of her parents who had died when she was too young to have retained any distinct memory of them; another was a picture of Aunt Emma in youthful days. Susanna treasured all she knew about her parents in her heart, and cherished their memory; but her feeling for them was the love of a memory—an idea—a hope; it lacked the warmth that enriches the owner; it seemed a singularly useless possession. Her aunt, on the other hand, she loved simply, as something she came into the world tied up with and which continued as a part of her life; she loved her uncritically, unconsciously,—no faintest tinge of individuality or sentimentality coloured this tie.

Other photographs adorned the mantel. Several school-friends, college friends and cousins smiled or looked out haughtily from gold-lace and blue frames. More of them, together with half a dozen youths—the partners of her momentary Platonic friendships—reposed in the desk drawer she devoted to what she classed as her souvenirs. Was it a prophetic sense that led her to induct what were meant to be heralds of a future into the realms of the past, already strewn with dance-cards, programmes, poems addressed to and by her, snap-shots, and shells picked up on various European shores?

For her bona-fide pictures of Europe Susanna had a special compartment, as she had a special compartment in her mind for

Love Days

its memories, from which a kind of sentimental enchantment radiated and suffused all approaching thought. She loved Europe—the face of Europe—with an almost sickening intensity; she loved it with nostalgia. And she did not wish to revisit it again until she was ready for it, for a long drink of it; and she conceived that such a condition would be reached in the infinitely remote period following her graduation after two long and closely packed years. And then . . . and then she might even—she whispered this divine secret to herself—continue her studies over there at some of the ancient universities in some of the ancient towns. Hence she had recently dissuaded her aunt from repeating the hasty summer trip in which they habitually indulged, and which had begun to oppress her with a sense of drinking the cream from the milk and leaving the perfect draft of Europe needlessly and dreadfully skimmed.

Susanna felt in a general way that this room of hers lacked beauty, but this did not quite trouble her . . . On the rare occasions when she gave the matter any thought she concluded that the drama of life was too absorbing to permit one to take thought of the actor's dressing-room, so to speak . . . Nor did her many comforts,—fine linen, silk covers, porcelain bath, lovely clothes—, give her positive, conscious pleasure, though their absence would certainly have given her positive pain. In a word: she took her material surroundings for granted, as she did her aunt, and most of her friends, and as she did not herself.

She drank her tea and ate her sandwiches with great though unconscious relish, as always. For she tead regularly since she lunched lightly at college, and frequently dined out, and dining out meant satisfying an appetite reduced to proportions suited for public exhibition at eight o'clock, or later. Tonight, too, she was dining out and going on to a dance, and she gulped the tea hastily to get to her work.

She worked with great concentration for an hour or more, and in that time finished everything but her daily theme, which she always left to the end as a kind of reward for previous trials survived. And she settled herself happily with paper and pen, and cast up her eyes to the ceiling for inspiration, and after a period of reflection began. She wrote:

"If you were to see me now, Professor Taylor, you would hardly concatenate me with Du Maurier. I am encased in a coral

Susanna Moore's

kimono straight from Japan, and from it there emanates a strange exotic perfume. My darkish bright hair is around and about my face and shoulders, it too, a kind of materialized perfume of my age and my sex,—a kind of flamboyant protest against the attribution of Du Maurieresqueness. . . . At this moment I am all shell, and I feel it. I feel my slimness and my silkiness and my various scents and the heaviness of my hair and the tautness of my lips, which I purse when I write, and my arm on the desk and my hand that draws these words . . . And the lazy swell and ebb of my breathing is delicious, now that I notice it, and my drowsiness is delicious . . . and I am going to a ball tonight. . . .

It is dark in here but for the pool of light that my desk-lamp makes. The maid has laid out my dress of silver spangles on the bed, and in the semi-darkness it shoots out glinting splinters of light towards me, symbols and portents of impending movements of frivolity. Yes, Dr. Taylor, I lead a double life; a hard-working intellectual life, a swift but steady stream flowing in the daylight of reason, and a frivolling, diverting social life, like a wiggling whirlpool shadowed by its own spray. (Susanna regarded and re-read this last phrase doubtingly, but her love of metaphor conquered her suspicions, and she continued.) To me this secondary life is what tobacco and wine are to such as you, I suppose, or perhaps tobacco only,—namely, a refreshing narcotic. (Refreshing narcotic, she wondered . . . but why not?) Were it my only life it would of course kill me with boredom, because it isn't life, it is only comic mask . . . "

At this point Susanna shook her flamboyant protest out of her face, re-read what she had written, flushed, and tore it up. "Drivel," she pronounced inwardly, "Marie Bashkirtseff stuff; drivel for me." And taking a fresh sheet, she stared at her ink-well, sucked her pen for a while, forgot her physical well-being, and started again, this time with a fine concentrated élan, breathing shortly and quickly. She now wrote:

"There is a little red devil in front of me, holding on to an ink-stand with his left hand. Would that he had that left hand only! But he has a right hand too, and that right hand he holds out toward me, I don't know how exactly, but in a way that makes me shudder. With his two eyes he holds my two eyes, until the outside world melts away and the two black eyes of the red devil

Love Days

grow as big as watermelons. He holds me in precisely the same way that Svengali held poor Trilby. Only Svengali was a musician, and my devil is a literary man. Only Svengali was a man, and my devil is a devil. And so, when I sit down at this desk, and he gallops over with his inkstand, and dips my pen into it, and holds me with those eyes and that hand, he does not whisper into my ear, "Sing, ma belle, and sing beautifully," but he croaks, "Write, my friend, and write badly."

With the last word Susanna relaxed, and lay huddled in her chair, re-reading her production. Her dimpling smile attested to her satisfaction in the vision she held of its value. The vision: for it was not so much her own judgment that she passed on its merit,—it was rather that she got at its value through foreseeing Dr. Taylor's estimation in the amused and a-little-amazed-at-its-excellence air with which she pictured him handing it back to her.— And happy in the consciousness of being a fountainhead of all kinds of unknown and delightful sensations and actions, she now set herself to the task of getting ready for her party.

During this process Susanna divided her attention between accomplishing the details of her toilet and speculating as to the details of the coming party. She thought of a number of persons who might be there, mostly male ones, and she thought of them all in close connection with herself, either next to her at table, or opposite to her, or talking or dancing with her. The pictures her mind composed were usually groups of two or three or four, in which there was a vast amount of life, contributed chiefly by herself, and surrounding this group of hers other vague and silent distant ones. And so, in imagination, she now seated herself next to some fascinating stranger, perhaps a bronzed explorer—although this was too good to be probable,—or some beautiful poet—although she had noticed that such a one, if he existed at all, did not at all events exist in ballrooms,— or next to nice Andrew Harvey, or Walter Compton, or Edward Le Grand, all of these probable and unexciting; and she considered just how amiable she would in every case be.

In the midst of her preparations her Aunt Emma entered the room.

"Come out for a moment, dear," she called into the dressing-room, "I've brought you something."

Susanna poked her head out between the curtains, and on seeing

Susanna Moore's

two boxes of flowers, flung into her kimono and emerged. One offering was a large bunch of fragrant violets, the other a generous spray of orchids. Tearing open the accompanying envelopes she was greeted by the names of Mr. Whitney and Jack Pierce.— Immediately her evening assumed a totally new aspect. Swept away as though they had never been were the tête-à-têtes and brilliant groupings of the moment before, and in their place there now arose new and heavier ones,—heavier with the weight of certainty.— The lovely flowers themselves received but the most cursory attention from her; they indeed existed for her only as extensions, so to say, of the cards enclosed; customary, conventional ones, to be carried about without soiling one's gloves. Yet she loved flowers hotly, and if she excluded these it was just because as representatives of men they lost their true character, as dogs lose theirs when harnessed to milkcarts, or peaches theirs when made into pie. Indeed so insensitive was she in this case to the æsthetic aspect that she actually preferred the orchids, flowers unsympathetic to her, to the violets, which she adored, because the former were the prolongation, or, rather perhaps, the shadow cast before of the personality of the mysterious Mr. Whitney, while the fragrant violets projected only the nice but flavourless Jack Pierce.

Susanna was in fact somewhat puzzled in connection with the orchids: her thoughts and forethoughts of the evening became tinged with a certain excitement,—an agreeable malaise. She would, of course, go to supper with Mr. Whitney at the dance; the flowers meant that. And probably he would have arranged to have some of the men of his sporting set, his cronies, at their table.— This made a strong appeal to her sense of the picturesque. She now saw herself, an Aspasia, at supper with—with the pugilists and charioteers,—the sporting men of that day no doubt. There was perhaps a little poetic license in this; but was not the contrasting combination of herself and the horsey men a poetic thing in its way? Well, it so seemed to her at the moment,—and she therefore neglected to visualize the other girls who might be at the table simultaneously, spoiling the effect.— Indeed, had Susanna been a painter she would have aligned herself with that Futurist group who use magnitude not as a quantitative, mathematical term, but qualitatively as significance. And had she painted as on this occasion she visualized, she would herself have emerged

Love Days

on the canvas huge, heroic, elderly, perpetually talking; Mr. Whitney, elderly too, and under life-size, holding a bunch of orchids at least as large as himself, and future bunches trailing off from him and out of the frame; the sporting men lined up like spectators at a ball game, smallish, but visibly engaged in watching her; the accompanying girls not painted at all, but only indicated by a few small letters. . . .

For a brief moment, to be sure, Susanna wondered, vaguely scared, why the formidable Mr. Whitney should pay her such marked attention. But this inquiry was quickly submerged in a flood of complex feeling, wherein there fused the conviction that after all she was not a schoolgirl, however she might feel, but a lovely if latent Aspasia; that everything was more or less queer, anyway, when others were involved; and that social life was not meant to be thought about, but to be taken lightly as play.—Nevertheless she felt very unusual, picturesque and strangely expectant as she surveyed herself in the mirror while her maid fastened her gown and her aunt asked her discreet and affable questions.

Mrs. Cathay's questions were habitually affable and discreet. This was in part due to the fact that she partook of the essence of these qualities, yet, chiefly, because she was possessed by a kind of constitutional cosmic indifference. Had anyone, however, accused her of a lack of interest in her niece, or in anyone or anything with established claims on her, she would have been both shocked and indignant. And sincerely so, since the species of her indifference—the generic, the cosmic quality of it—was beyond her power of recognition. She never shirked what she considered to be her duty, and she considered ever so many things in this way, and she possessed the energy to see things through once she had undertaken them. And, lastly, she harboured no interests greater than those connected with the child of the deeply mourned sister who had been the greatest love of her life. So why should she, who was at best not introspective, have recognized the brand of her indifference. . . .

And this indifference had received strengthening in the circumstances of her life. The chief of these had been her precipitation from a placid and prolonged girlhood into marriage with a temperamental, nervous, difficult man whose needs this unintuitional

Susanna Moore's

wife had not only not succeeded in filling, but had not even divined. So that, although she had suffered greatly under the strain of marriage, she whose prim blondness of spirit and of body was fashioned for the aloofness of permanent virginity, she derived from her lack of insight the comfort of attributing her dull suffering not to herself nor to him, but to the state of marriage—ordained by God and custom. Or rather by God custom. And she had, therefore, been able to bear her state with resignation. But just this unprotesting reception of pain had blunted her dull emotions and her imagination concerning them, and when, after ten years, she was left a widow, she was left almost callous in a personal way, and stupidly devoid of all understanding of emotional values in human relationship in general.

To Susanna her Aunt Emma stood vaguely for the incarnation of the average-normal in all its phases. Even the way in which she accepted things without remark represented to the young Susanna the usual attitude of the mature and settled, and demonstrated only one interesting fact: the extreme non-conformity of her own nature. Her uncle-in-law, as she preferred to classify him, she remembered quite well as an irritable, discontented, handsome man with a passion for cards and for dogs. And she remembered too her aunt's worried little ministrations to his physical and temperamental comfort; her miscalculated soothing manoeuvres, always vain; she remembered their joint intimate, yet unharmonized undertakings, and their occasional placid affectionate moods. All these patches Susanna took for the stuff that marriage was made of.

In regard to marriage for herself Susanna's mind was lazy, rejecting. She almost never thought of it otherwise than abstractly. When—rarely—under the influence of remarks on the subject she did try to picture herself as married, the picture was an uninspired, meagre, dreary academic thing, one that died in the process of composition. In a general way it contained a house twenty-five to forty-five feet wide with a white or a brick façade, an interior like other wealthy interiors, a second-floor-back brocaded bedroom with twin beds and, at their foot, a lounge covered with filet antique; and next to it the boudoir and dressing and bathrooms. By the time her thoughts had completed this prosaic apartment they seemed to swoon away with distaste, for they never had the energy to climb upstairs to the regulation nurseries

Love Days

or downstairs to the formal rooms. And as for filling the empty twin bed with a concrete occupant, Susanna's thoughts shied away from such a deed long before contemplating it. Marriage was to her, in fact, about as alluring a prospect, and as real a one, as might be to a fifteen year old boy with the world before him the proposal to settle down in a house just-like-every-one's, conduct it, and rear in it a family of his own creation.

"Are you using the carriage tonight, dear?" asked Aunt Emma.

"No, Penelope is going to call for me and bring me home."

"That's nice. Well, dear, I hope you will enjoy yourself. Bridget will wait up for you in the Library. I must be going: Mrs. Sheldon is coming to the settlement with me tonight, and we are first dining at the club; I'm afraid I'm late now." She kissed her niece on the cheek.

Before throwing on her coat Susanna gave herself a last interested look. She was very radiant. Her bright hair, her white brow, her red lips, her general milk and copper *beauté de diable* and her glittering silver dress all flashed together into radiance. She felt very pleased and a little astonished that all of this belonged to her. Belongs to me! she corrected herself: *Is me!* She approached the mirror, so closely that she could almost, as she thought, feel the texture of her lips, and then suddenly she kissed them, felt the shock of the cold glass, recoiled and blushed. Certainly this felt more like belonging than like being . . .

She wondered again whether she was beautiful. . . . It would be wonderful if she were beautiful, because there was nothing more wonderful than beauty, and more—more beautiful! Yes, there seemed to be a special beauty attaching to beauty. . . . It had an unpossessed, unspoilable, detached quality. . . . It was there for itself alone. . . . Even personal beauty. One's other qualities were bound up with everything else, and were at one's mercy; but beauty was over against one: one could admire and love and enjoy it quite objectively, without reservation or fear of any kind. . . . Since one wasn't responsible; since it was a gift. . . .

She finally dashed away from her doubts and their off-shoots, and down to the waiting Penelope.

Susanna Moore's

About Penelope no question as to beauty could arise. All of her visible to the eye was beautiful with a dark and clear and pool-like beauty. Her small head with tight waves of glossy black hair was so perfect an oval and grew so delicately on her slender throat that one felt that it might be plucked from its stem, like a fruit. Her eyes were set in this firm oval like enamel eyes; they, like all her subtly but definitely chiselled features, had the finish and finality of metal. And as her head suggested sleek and polished fruits, so the whole of her body suggested the sleek and polished bodies of bronze effigies of archaic antelope and deer. She was at times, in fact, nicknamed Gazelle or Antelope by friends,—new friends who did not know her well. For neither in her manner nor in her nature was there any faintest suggestion of the shy and sensitive abruptness of the deer. On the contrary, she was composed, definite, a shade pedantic, this gazelle. She spoke slowly and with caution. And she thought in the fashion of her speech.

Penelope and Susanna were not only cousins, but they had from childhood on been intimate companions until their companionship was broken into by Susanna's college career. They now saw but little of one another, yet their fondness survived;—Penelope's coloured by a tinge of resentment at the partial estrangement and a cool admiration for its cause, while Susanna, since she had ceased to see the beautiful Penelope continually, now realized her as a creature she was bound to through ties of blood only and memories of a common childhood. She rarely now thought of her in her absence, yet she rarely saw her without a little wave of affection, and a thrill of pleasure in her beauty and the happy consciousness that through their relationship it would always be there for her, a permanent decoration of her life.

The girls kissed.

"What are you wearing?" Susanna asked, as they started.

Penelope opened her coat and displayed an oyster-white gown heavily embroidered and beaded, a very handsome gown, much handsomer than Susanna's.

"Oh, how lovely!" Susanna breathed. "Is it Callot's?" Penelope nodded. "When I leave college and have time, I'm going to have real clothes too, wonderful things, works of art, combin-

Love Days

ations of Callot and myself." She laughed. "You won't know me.— How wonderful you look tonight, Nel; how especially wonderful, you know!"

Penelope's fruity face turned on its stem to Susanna; Penelope's firm hand clasped Susanna's. "I'm very happy, dear, that's why, no doubt," and her eyes seemed to turn up at their corners as did her lips that curved into a smile reminiscent of Leonardo's Santa Anna.

Susanna, sensing the formally sentimental tone, gave Penelope a startled look. And Penelope responded to the startled eyes and the slight clutch of the hand by calmly continuing: "I'm engaged to Lawrence; it's still a secret."

Susanna was for a moment stunned, and then overcome by a sick feeling. She felt faint—she felt queer—she wanted to get away— She stared with wide, unseeing eyes, and a trembling mouth that refused to speak, at Penelope, who flushing a little, cried: "Susanna, what is the matter! I'm engaged to Lawrence Dalton. I'm very happy! Aren't you glad?"

Susanna pulled herself together and gasped: "Yes, yes; I wish you had told me gradually.— You're going to marry?" she continued in tones of hushed astonishment. "Since when—I mean when did it occur to you—I mean—Oh, Penelope—!" Susanna was about to break down and cry or scream, she thought, when Penelope's words arrested her.

"We've really thought of it for a year or more. I knew that he loved me, but I accepted him only last night, definitely. I wanted to be sure I knew my own mind. And I'm very happy." And her curling lips and eyes cast up a little further, and her throat thickened and curved and threw her graceful head forward as she offered her polished cool cheek to Susanna with the words: "Kiss me, Sue, Baby."

Susanna kissed her. But she kissed her mechanically, with spiritual distaste; and while Penelope continued in her placid and common-sensible manner to express her satisfaction and impart her plans, she had a hard time keeping afloat on the welter of new impressions and feelings that had so suddenly risen. "Baby!" . . . probably because she had not yet accepted some Lawrence Dalton in some brown or blue drawingroom! Oh, how could Penelope have done it . . . Lawrence, a big solid wall cutting off sunshine

Susanna Moore's

and air. . . . This lovely Nel was willing to be shut in, to get married. . . . To a man, a quite ordinary man, not even good-looking; big, a little stout, facetious; and who smoked cigars and was on Wall street. Willing to get married to him forever, and have a wedding like Annabelle Curtis had last week. . . . That dreadful wedding with the trousseau and presents on exhibition, and detectives guarding them.— Beautiful, placid, cool Penelope whose hair was two inches longer than her own, and with whom she had slept in one bed often and often. And now Lawrence—A blush suffused Susanna's face; she again felt extreme distaste.

"Would you have everything trimmed with net, the way Chéruit is doing, or with val?" Penelope was asking.

"I don't know," Susanna replied dully, staring through her. "Oh, Nel," she cried, laughing a little to keep afloat, "I have to get used to it—I can't think—it's so sudden!" And as she did not trust herself to look at Penelope she did not see the astonished and a little disapproving glance with which the enamel eyes viewed her. And if she had, what difference would it have made, since she was completely bowled over, and Penelope was, for the time being, a complete stranger to her. . . .

Before alighting the girls kissed again. This was the second time Susanna found a kiss from Penelope's beautiful lips an unpleasant experience.

At dinner, seated between two frequently met with youths, Susanna, excited as she was, and unimpeded by any new impressions, climbed into one of her so-called brilliant moods,—so-called by her most complete admirers. She herself, on this point, as on that of her beauty, had lurking but lively doubts. For she conceived brilliancy to embrace both wit and knowledge, and in the inner folds of her mind she admitted that her attainments in these directions were as yet not vast. Her own private labelling of her lively mood was playfulness, and her even more private, almost unformulated, evaluation was silliness, one of the many frowned at states that charmed her.— And fortunately, as Lawrence was prevented from being present this evening, Penelope, engaged in being pleasant to some other man, seemed, on the surface at least, again normal whenever she came into Susanna's vision or mind. And so Susanna danced successfully enough on the waves of

Love Days

her own nonsense, thinking to placate the troubled waters below, until the dinner came to an end and she left the room with the other women.

During the feminine interim, in which stout women stood and slim ones sat (with an added increment of well-being due to the *standees* having to stand), and, together, discussed their golf, bridge, diet, *couturières* and *corsetières*,—an interim that had long since ceased to interest Susanna even mildly, she pursued her own thoughts lazily, undisturbed by the buzz of talk around her. Thoughts of her day and her evening to come:—vague, floating, suspended, like the quality of the period of suspension in which they were occurring. Even Penelope, enthroned in beauty and despite her awful secret joining in the talk, created in her spirit only little clouds of composite emotion that floated by loosely and left in their train the faint taste of disappointment, fear, affection and a sense of bereavement. . . .

When at length the party reached the dance, a large affair framed at Merry's it was already in full swing.

Susanna always felt a little shock of excitement run through her at the first impact with the white and gold and crystal glitter of these scenes, their modulated musical noise, and their black and white and multi-coloured movement. Entering a ball room was, she felt, like plunging into a stream whose current was too swift to permit you to swim: you gave up your individual rhythm for the time being and became a part of its exhilarating jerkiness.

Susanna danced well, and as she enjoyed it, she danced a great deal though by no means continuously, for she harboured a strong conviction that she sat out even better than she danced. And certainly, when she enjoyed talking she enjoyed it far more than dancing.— Tonight however her taste was all for dancing, and she danced continuously and strenuously: danced, chatted and laughed, and nevertheless felt as though she were only filling or killing time, somehow . . .

The expected finally happened, and the younger donor of her flowers came to claim her. And before she quite knew that she had definitely decided on anything she heard herself refusing him: "I can't go to supper with you, Jack. I'm awfully sorry, but I had already promised. . . . But I'll dance with you as often as you want me too;—and perhaps oftener," she added, dimpling, and looking at him obliquely from under the curling lashes of her

Susanna Moore's

naïve blunted eyes that opened slowly, slowly, converting the little movement into a significant gesture like a smile or a shrug.

"Dance with me now, to begin with," begged the disappointed youth.

She dismissed her partner. "You see, nothing could stop me, even if you hadn't sent me lovely violets and didn't dance divinely," and she unfolded another sweet stare. She looked indeed as if she were flirting, but in the reality of her consciousness she was only playing. Playing at being agreeable to Jack,—at feeling agreeable, more agreeable than she really felt. Just for fun. And she liked him well enough at that, when she was with him, and she never thought of him when she wasn't. And indeed, his devotion to her was so youthfully abject that flirtatious manipulations were, under any circumstances, superfluous.

They danced off together, and Susanna enjoyed dancing with him so much that his occasional remarks: "You're not as nice to me as you might be, Sue!" "For whom are you throwing me down, Susan?" "With whom are you going to supper?—I'll see you anyhow, so you may as well tell me now!" "Sue, have a heart!" failed to elicit other than perfunctory, languid responses, chanted to the music: "Please don't abridge me. Call me Susanna. Did you know it means Lily?" "Hebrew." "I like it, oh yes." "Yes, I think it does suit me. I hope it does. Don't talk so much; you dance much better than you scold; you dance divinely; you're a dear when you dance. It's too bad—"

"What's too bad?" he interrupted, "That I don't do other things as well?"

"It's too bad that I don't care more for dancing, sir!" and Susanna turned her orbs—on these occasions her eyes smacked a little of orbs—on Jack's helpless features.

"You know you care for dancing, Susan; you're posing!" he, however, replied cheerfully. "What do you pretend to care for more? Studying, reading, and deep things like that?" and his tone relegated these things to great depths indeed, depths so great and distant as to belong to another world altogether, a mythical one whose only connection with the real one lay in the college curriculum. For, strangely enough, Jack had been at college a whole year, slowly declining before he actually fell through.

"That's how you're so wonderful, Susan," the youth continued, less cheerfully and more ecstatically; "you're so clever and you

Love Days

know so much, and no one would ever suspect it! You're so human!"

Susanna burst into peals of laughter. "Show me a new step, Jackie," she said at length to the perplexed youth.

"Here's one— You glide two and then back like this—No, you don't get it, Sue. Try again!"

Sue didn't get it because at this moment she caught sight of the other donor, the exciting one, standing at one of the exit doors in a group of door-standees. With the air of having been there for a long time. And Susanna asked herself with a flutter of the heart whether it could be possible that he was about to leave without having spoken to her. . . . And suddenly he seemed very distant in every way; a complete stranger; almost an enemy, an unfair enemy. . . . She suddenly thought that she disliked him thoroughly; she wished hotly that she did not know him at all rather than in this false and superficial fashion—the only fashion in which one could know an elderly man of the world, a man of over thirty with smooth satirical inscrutable ways that concealed his unknown and unknowable elderly personality. . . . Not a word that Jack was saying reached her mind: all parts of her nervous system were busy being jarred. Her sweet and plastic face was Medusa-like in its rigidity.

The music stopped while Jack was still protesting at her lack of interest. A great blast of trumpets burst out. In the midst of the din Mr. Whitney was by her side.

"This is ours, I believe, Miss Susanna," he pronounced with finality, drawing her arm through his and scrutinizing her in a paternal and proprietorial way, while she dismissed Jack.

"Of course," Susanna, restored to equanimity instantly, and now quite cool, replied; "of course supper is yours. I should have kept it for you even if I hadn't wanted to: I accepted these orchids as a bribe."

Mr. Whitney laughed goodnaturedly, for he saw that Susanna was rather pluming herself, her young social self, on having boldly forestalled him. Susanna's naïveté amused Mr. Whitney, and many other qualities of her youthfulness, such as her creamy skin and her glittering hair and her dancing smile and her veiled and yet exposed eyes charmed him, while her ambition and her not too flagrant intellectuality seemed to him possessions in which under certain conditions great pride might be taken. For al-

Susanna Moore's

though Mr. Whitney had met with all of Susanna's desirable qualities before in the course of his lengthy sentimental adventurings, he had met with them separately: this was the first time he had encountered them assembled under one skin. Moreover Mr. Whitney's passions had cooled from the fire of the lover flamed by the object of his love, to the glow of the appreciator over the object of his desire:—in a word, his over-thirty-years-old flame was now that of the appraiser, the connoisseur, the collector. And Susanna's manifoldness of attraction seemed to him to be eminently worth owning even at the almost fatally high price that all objects in the market in which she was displayed, commanded.

Mr. Whitney did not indeed, for a moment, haggle with himself over this price;—it was, in fact, precisely as a matrimonial venture that Susanna seemed to promise so much in the way of returns. And even his most private and inconsequential fancies never once dislocated Susanna's rôle in the sentimental drama of his life; she was its legitimate heroine. She was the protected young woman whose budding potentialities he, the experienced man, would unfold in the proper order of their co-ordination in his idea of perfect womanhood.

"I suppose you expect me to tell you that you look very charming, even more completely charming than usual, fair child," he whispered, en route to the supper-table.

"You have told me," Susanna fibbed. "Your eyes have told me. You admire me immensely—tonight!"

"I do; and not only tonight . . . And I admire your aplomb a great deal more than your gown." He laughed contentedly.

"That's a compliment anyway, however you may mean it," Susanna drawled, wondering whether her gown was ugly; "because the former is manufactured by me and the latter is only given to me."

"I should say that both were given to you, fortunate child."

"No," Susanna put in eagerly, "you're really mistaken: I'm naturally sh—" and she stopped herself in the betrayal of this confidence abruptly, remembering at the last minute that this was her unreal social life and that this was the un-understandable Mr. Whitney.

"Of course you're naturally shy," soothed the inscrutable Mr. Whitney, who had been informed of this otherwise unnoticeable characteristic by numerous young owners. "You cultivate

Love Days

aplomb to conceal your sensitiveness. You do it well, that is why I admire it—and you.” Herewith he looked deep into Susanna’s serious starry eyes with his own unfathomable ones,—teasingly, intimately.

And Susanna, who for a moment had been severely shocked by what she considered signs of totally unsuspected humanness in Mr. Whitney, was again restored to calm playfulness by this last evidence of his failure to take himself and herself—particularly herself—seriously.

“But,” she rejoined, unwilling to accept a teasing, “I really was shy—though never, of course, in the presence of men who admired me,” and she turned the battery of her orbs on him, “but with other unprepossessed persons for whom one had to make an effort—”

They had, however, arrived at their table and were being noisily greeted by the eight others already there.

Susanna was proved right in foreseeing Whitney’s pals, the horsey men, as their companions. Here they were indeed, but, instead of forming a deadish background, each one of them had provided for his participation in life by bringing with him a lady of his choice: all of these very much alive too, and all of them, as it happened, married women. And all of them delighted to see Jim Whitney, and bored to see the girl with him.

Susanna, who brought face to face with this state of affairs, could not help noticing it, immediately sank into the depths of depression. She looked about her dazedly, a little like a trapped beast looking for means of escape.— But there was no way out: here she was unhappily seated and here she must stay. She carried her blunted stare around the table, from the sleek, bejewelled women, so unaccountably prominent, to the horsey men so absorbed in them, to her neighbour, a red-faced giant with melancholy pale drooping eyes, a savage who was known never to speak to a young girl.—An idea sprang from her mind and lighted her eyes.

“Since you’ve brought me here, let’s pretend I’m a married woman too, Mr. Whitney! Talk to me as though I were; and you didn’t like my husband;—and neither did I,” Susanna proposed enthusiastically, finding the last condition easy to imagine.

“But it is just because you are not married, Miss Susanna, that you are so—so unspeakably charming—to me,” responded

Susanna Moore's

Mr. Whitney, who wished to say neither too much at this point of time, nor yet too little.

"Really?" Susanna lifted her brows incredulously. "Well, that makes no difference, anyway! Let's pretend anyway! Just for fun! For a change you know. Pretend, Mr. Whitney: pretend that my hair is brushed back tight, and I have huge pearls in my ears, and a string like Mrs. Grant's around my neck.—Mr. Whitney," she cooed in a new voice, "don't you think it unkind of Peter to have left me to go yachting,—lonely like this?" and she unfolded her oblique stare on Mr. Whitney.

"No, Miss Susanna, I won't pretend, for I'm jealous of Peter already," whispered Mr. Whitney, but comfortably and composedly.

"Oh, you are pretending! But call me Mrs. Susanna—to begin with."

Mr. Whitney, however, did not call her Mrs. Susanna, nor would he in any way play the game; instead he saw fit to summon up all his conversational inventiveness to succeed in what he considered entertaining Susanna, and thereby keep her off the subject he felt to be, at this moment, so inappropriate and inauspicious.—And Susanna, reduced to listening to him, and "in propria persona" at that, fell back into depression, and wondered why things were so much less attractive than one foresaw; and decided to try in future to abstain from looking ahead.

On the way back to the ballroom, much against her inclination, she was steered into what was called the conservatory. Here her companion hastened to secure the only conservatoresque feature of the room, a small stiff sofa situated back of some palms that grew in occidental fashion straight out of the carpet along with gilt chairs and onyx pedestals supporting marble Neapolitan children extracting thorns from their feet, and weeping ladies with veils and lace collars.

From this concealed sofa, however, Susanna had nothing more painful to view than the salmon-pink walls and Mr. Whitney. But Mr. Whitney, although ordinarily negatively pleasant to the eye, was at this moment unpleasantly unusual in his demeanor. He was, to be sure, only engaged in removing her silver scarf from her arm, and draping it on her shoulders while remarking that it was cool in here, an opinion that she was far from sharing. But into this simple attention he was introducing some kind of

Love Days

significance that scared even the self-absorbed Susanna. She noticed that his hands were hesitating and his gestures caressing, and that his face was closer to hers than she had imagined Whitney faces could ever get, and that his inscrutable eyes were not inscrutable, but soft and sentimental.— Or perhaps she did not so much notice these things as feel them, feel them oppressively.

Susanna shrank; shrank in all ways; shrank into a defensive petrified attitude like that of a fortress, as Mr. Whitney proceeded to seat himself next to her,—very next to her, she thought, growing extraordinarily astonished and annoyed. And he, having seated himself to his satisfaction, took her hand into his, and trying to look into her averted eyes, said as softly as the instrument of a strident voice permitted: “Miss Susanna,—Susanna—we’ve been good friends for quite a long time haven’t we,—dear?—” He paused; he pressed her hand in both of his; he drew himself a little closer.

Had Susanna given expression to her immediate reaction to these overtures she would have screamed “Heavens, don’t do that,” snatched her hand and herself from his grasp, run half a mile and decided to consider this whole scene an illusion. But various conditions automatically inhibited such a satisfactory course of action, and instead of actions there ensued repressions. She gently removed her hand from his, and she heard herself remark gently but icily: “I think you are exaggerating, Mr. Whitney.”

The desired results did not, however, follow, and Mr. Whitney, unimpressed, once more took possession of her shrinking hand; took it into his two settled ones, and carrying it elaborately to his lips imprinted on it a kiss which started its life very chastely but ended it less so. Was it that Mr. Whitney, though a sportsman and a man of the world, and of wide experience and great efficiency, and with the temperament of a collector,—was it perhaps that Mr. Whitney was at this moment quite simply affected by the nearness to possession, as he thought, of this young sweet desirable creature? For, gazing into her surprised and starry eyes, the blood mounted to his face, and ardour sprang to his eyes, and his lips lived a moment of abandon.

Susanna became panicky. With blind distaste she recoiled against the end of the sofa and shoved a cushion toward him, half consciously, in place of herself, as it were. In the manner

Susanna Moore's

in which mothers present certain toys to their babies. And Mr. Whitney, just as unconsciously following her movement, and pressing upon her ardently once more, devoted himself to the task of bringing about that final climax which would resolve, definitely, all these preliminary difficulties. His penetrating voice veiled itself in the emotion of profound earnestness, his penetrating glance suffered the same sweet eclipse, and he murmured: "I'm very fond of you, Susanna—I am more than fond of you, Susanna; sweet Susanna. Look into my eyes, dear."

To Susanna the eclipse was not sweet, neither was the sentiment, nor any of the symptoms of the collapse of Mr. Whitney's impressive rigidity, and her own feelings of astonishment, upheaval and helplessness were decidedly horrible. . . . And it seemed to her that every one of her available straying thoughts and all of her scattering consciousness was collected and balled up in her ensuing reply: "Oh, nonsense Mr. Whitney, we're not such wonderful friends. . . . I have at least a dozen better than you. . . . I've never been really chummy with anyone but a boy in my whole life—and I never could be. . . . You are just a man of the world to me, a schoolgirl,—and it's fascinating in a way—but it doesn't really count at all, you know— Do let's go back and dance."

Mr. Whitney witnessed these light words issuing from a strained mouth; and, gradually, the rebellious eyes, the compressed lips, the repeated toss of the head and the general expression of bitter enmity that informed Susanna's person enlightened him, if not in regard to Susanna's specific state of mind, which would have been too much to expect, at least as to the complete failure of his own project. He flushed, turned a little pale, bit his lips and offered his arm silently to Susanna, who had risen, and now accepted this formal offering with relief.

"You make me regret I'm not a boy again," he managed to say with stiff formality and in tones of finality.

"It is too bad," Susanna rejoined hurriedly. "Or that I'm not old, like you. Mature, you know," she added graciously, regretting it the next moment, frightened.

But Mr. Whitney took no advantage of her imprudence. He lapsed into complete silence, and at the first opportunity he rid himself of this burden of Susanna, which, like the sack in the fairy tale, grew heavier with every moment.

Love Days

Susanna left her chance deliverer at once and rushed breathlessly about after Penelope. Having found her, she rushed her breathlessly into the dressing-room, rushed her breathlessly down to the waiting car, and home. She gave as her excuse a suddenly remembered lesson that had to be prepared before the morning.

And she felt all the while that she was fleeing from something enormous. . . . Something in which Mr. Whitney was but a shining point, and which comprised, besides himself, all shades and degrees of light, and monstrous deep shadows that, somehow, radiated even more intensely and persistently than light. . . . Or, at any rate, shot out gloomy prehensile fingers at her. . . .

But being obliged to converse sanely with Penelope had its narcotizing effect.

It was not until she had left her with an untasted kiss, had entered her home and her room, had dismissed her maid, had torn off her clothes with unfeeling fingers, had pulled down the window, snapped off the light and slammed into bed in the belief that she would elude her nerves and her memories in sleep,—it was not until then that everything in her awoke and quickened to intensest life.—

In the coolness of sheltered night, then, Susanna laid her head trustfully upon her pillow. And for a moment it lay there. For a brief moment, and then—surprisingly—her copper waves began to move. To move as waves do on a stormy sea. As waves do on a stormy sea, swishing and tossing from right to left, and from left to right, and from right to centre, and back and forth, and to and fro, dragging with them the rest of her body in an unceasing dance. And like her waves, and like herself, so the mysterious thoughts that are not in space, but take place in the head, they too, tossed through her consciousness in the billowy masses, keeping it alive, oh, so alive.

Penelope and her stout husband to be, these two, suitably garbed, waved giddily about to the strains of Mendelssohn's wedding march punctuated by blasts of supper trumpets. And following them there danced a long and tipsy procession of dozens and dozens of pieces of trousseau, hers and his, and all alike trimmed with val or net; and strange furnishings of their house, salmon-pink and onyx; and their wedding presents, and the detectives who guarded them, and their future children, numberless

Susanna Moore's

babies of the same age, and their nurses and chauffeurs and automobiles. . . . And in between, horribly, Mr. Whitney's face kept advancing and receding, like a cork on a wave, and his words blew across, like sharp gusts of wind, and on her silver-spangled lap there obtruded again and again his settled hands, grabbing hers. . . .

For isolated moments, to be sure, Susanna was successful in sweeping aside these horrors with deliberately recalled memories of Dr. Taylor and Trilby and Blanche and her so-called real life in general;—but only for moments. As an occasional cross-current equalizes a tossing sea and gives a moment of calm, so acted they, the thoughts of her real life, and then—and then, undammably, there rose again, and surged and tossed and rolled, the waves of that other, and so strangely alive, unreal one. And black waters hissed, and foam flew, and the air was dense with the spray of bewilderment and distaste. . . .

Susanna did not ask herself why her first proposal from a man not her friend should so sicken her, or why her cousin's marriage to another man not her friend should so distress her;—she was, indeed, in no condition to formulate questions of any kind: she could but let her emotion toss her about, hither and thither, thither and hither. . . . And if for a moment she sank blessedly on the threshold of sleep, back would hobble her visions, contorted, deformed, different and yet the same, and awaken her fully again to the noisy world that pressed in upon her in the silent room.

And what seemed hours and hours had passed slowly, and she had not succeeded in making a connection with the bed on which, to be sure, she lay, but which seemed to be on the point of spewing her up continually. Hours and hours. . . . And then, suddenly, like a little gift from nowhere, there dropped into her mind the thought, the happy thought, that it was within the sphere of the possible, by rising, to abandon this dreadful struggle with this couch of sleeplessness.— So up she shot, pitched into her kimono, turned on the light, slammed to the window, drew a chair to the desk and flung into it. And no further form of activity suggesting itself, she collapsed on the desk, her flamboyant head dropped on her childish hands.

And after a time her eyes opened to the light and encountered the daily theme she had, æons before, in the peaceful afternoon,

Love Days

composed. She took it up, and holding it under the lamp, began to read. She smiled. And continuing to read, she continued to smile. The creases of pain about her mouth smoothed, the heavy lids over her tired eyes lifted, she raised her bent head.—The heaviness of the night dissolved into mild light as, snatching pen and paper, she began to write again. To write another theme, for tomorrow . . . and perhaps one for the day after . . . and the day after that. . . .

Her elbow on the desk, her slim body in a rigid curve of flaming silk, her flamboyant hair flowing, her pen to her lips that seemed to have opened to the dews of night, her shining blind eyes heavenward turned, she looked less like a schoolgirl seeking in creative fancy to halt the onslaughts of life, than like some pre-Raphaelite muse waiting for a Jove to descend upon her in the guise of inspiration.

And thus Susanna spent the remainder of this disturbed and disturbing night.

ON awakening Susanna kept her eyes shut and indulged in the weird entertainment of trying to remember where she was, and what she would in consequence see when she opened them.

After a moment, in which her consciousness registered nothing but a vague feeling of a somewhere she objected to, and a something she did not wish to see, knowledge came over her and overcame her with a rush. She rolled over on her pillows wildly, buried her face in their yielding depths and wildly threw out her arms on both their sides.

And why indeed open her eyes upon this horrible room? Upon its faded brown and gilt walls with unfaded squares from which she had removed Kings of Prussia and Tyrolean peasants; upon its red chenille drapes, and red plush chairs, and white lace curtains that cut like a knife; upon an olive green oven; upon a washstand-basin and towel rack and slopjar and spittoon.

Susanna shuddered. Why indeed view this hateful room whose mustiness she could not avoid smelling even at this very moment when her nose was buried in her scented pillow! Yes, in this room one sensed the whole of the three quarters of a century of its service to the stream of public that had incessantly flowed through it. Even this bed! This very bed had— And Susanna shuddered some more, until a rigid fixation of her inner eye on the vision of a hygienic laundry gradually stabilized her, aided and abetted by the soothing touch of her own silken bedding, the only substitute she had consented to introduce into this "set," as she had amiably called it, when first encountered.

"No, Auntie," she had said, as she surveyed her aunt's room, an exact replica of her own, but garnished with pieces of *vieille étoffe* thrown across tables and over chairs, antique lace bedspread and cushions, gold toilet set and picture frames, taffeta and lace hat-stand, and all those accessories that to the wealthy American have become commonplaces. "No, Auntie," Susanna had said, "I don't want anything at all. In a way it's nice to have something not hideous to rest your eyes on, but this is too much like wearing Rue de la Paix lingerie over Jaeger underwear that persists in

Love Days

sticking out in places. Anyway it spoils the atmosphere. I want to feel that I'm in Berlin."

That was three days after her arrival; this was a month later, and Susanna no longer wished to feel herself so unadulteratedly in Berlin. This morning, in fact, she thought that smelling her locus was as far as she could go; that to face it—view it, hear it, and touch it,—was entirely beyond her strength. So she lay stretched out, embracing her only friends present, her pillows and coverlet, while she let her thoughts embrace all those foreign enemies she would, sooner or later, upon opening her eyes, encounter.

First of all Bridget would enter and tell her that her bath was prepared, and close the window, and help her into her dressing-gown, not half warm enough for the climate of this room and its environs. Then she would shiver through the red plush and chenille salon, which, according to her aunt's unproductively sensitive nose, contained the aroma of the cigar-stumps of fifty years of visitors; would shiver through her aunt's bedroom, empty for the moment, since Mrs. Cathay was visiting in Dresden; and on, through the public hall, to the remote bathroom. In this bathroom there was but one suggestion of a bathroom, a tin bathtub, and this seemed to Susanna a very inadequate one, owing to the overwhelming irrelevance of the presence of a huge stained glass window giving on a dark hall, a parquet floor, an upholstered armchair, and some one on the wall with a conspicuously great number of coronation robes on her person. Every morning the same experience befell Susanna—: never had she felt so depressed as in this bathroom, also so naked. In other bathrooms it seemed natural to be naked for a while, at times even exhilarating;—not so here. On the contrary. She wondered why, but she wondered in vain. She gave it up, and surrendered to the feeling.

After her bath she would return by the same frigid route to her bedroom, now heated by central heat that did not heat, and the green oven, which did, and which in turn was heated by the house-knave,—as Susanna translated him. This house-knave, she felt, it would have been far nicer to have known in a usual manner, than in the way she knew him, more or less like a logical presupposition: implicated, as it were, in the heated oven. For it seemed dreadfully, almost indecently, indelicate to recognize

Susanna Moore's

persons one did not know by their body odour. Nor could the window be opened to mitigate the conditions for recognition, for logic opposed such a procedure, in as much as an open window again necessitated the presence of the object it was meant to remove.

Upon returning to her room whose temperature and atmosphere had thus been changed by oven and knave, she would proceed to dress. She would stand as close to the oven as the laws of physics permitted, since unfortunately this was no Russian oven into which one might enter to lie curled up, warm and sleepy, and sleep, and sleep. . . .

Susanna, eyes still hermetically closed, drew up her eyebrows and dropped the corners of her mouth. She looked sixteen years old, and she looked as though in another minute she would not only burst into tears, but would make a youthful noise about it. But evidently she found the act of immersion into her martyrdom more satisfactory than tears, for straightening out her features she plunged back into it, and proceeded to dwell luxuriously and in expansive detail on one and all of the unpleasant experiences she could remember or foresee.

When, then, she would have put on enough clothes to make the operation of brushing her hair uncomfortable and unsanitary, Bridget would perform it. During its performance, she, Susanna, would sit sideways on the red plush chair that caught the dust and everything else, and, in the horrible gilt mirror over the bureau, would gaze at Bridget brushing her hair very much as though it were a carpet, and at herself.

She herself was, to be sure, a mitigating sight. Her hair looked more coppery than ever in contrast with the dull red plush, her skin milkier, her eyes starrier, and her oval more delicate and younger. She was slimmer, sleeker, and more graceful than four years ago; she fixed her hair with greater skill and some artifice to give to her head a classical roundness; she had far more physical poise; she pleased herself far more. Yet, she saw that she still looked unfinished, as it were, and extremely young. "Ach," Berlin ladies had a habit of saying in various ways, when she answered their questions as to her age, "twenty-two already! So old! And have you then enjoyed your youth? But you do not look so old, you do not look old at all; I should have given you

Love Days

seventeen!" And Susanna, when considering these comments, had felt that to them too should be given seventeen, seventeen strong somethings, and she hoped it wasn't true, as reported, that some of the women of this city enjoyed being chastised by masterful and virile husbands. Anyway not seventeen times. . . .

She unearthed from her memories, again, the episode of the lady who had gone so far as to prod her with hard fingers in order to ascertain whether her twenty-two-years-old but seventeen-years-appearing body was or was not confined in a corset. In the end these investigations had bewildered instead of enlightening the investigator, and she was obliged after all to supplement her independent explorations with an appeal to authority. "Aber—what is this? This one cannot call a corset—" And Susanna had informed her that it was a ceinture, a belt of elastic without bones. "Ach! But wherefore then such a thing, neither a corset, nor yet not a corset?" "To hold up my stockings, madam," Susanna, who no longer was shy, had replied. "Not to hold up myself. I, madam, am the same with and without a corset, as I am the same with and without a chaperon." And she remembered to have enjoyed her own remark;—but how awful were episodes in which one enjoyed nothing but one's own remarks. . . .

Indeed, it now seemed to her as though every one in this city were obsessed by a mania for the public expression of their reactions to every inch of her person. Her hair—its texture, colour and arrangement—aroused interested comment; her clothes, her accent, her handwriting, her dancing, her handshake, her perfume. A silly youth, she recalled, getting angry all over again, had at dinner remarked, closing his eyes voluptuously: "The perfume of your hair is intoxicating, gracious one!" "Oh, it's just Roger et Gallet's ordinary stuff," she had replied. "I refer not to the artificial scent, which leaves me cold, but to the natural scent to which I am peculiarly sensitive. . . ."

Why indeed could they not leave her a little more alone, all of these people, Susanna asked vaguely of some indefinite source of information as she lay on her back, sinking deeper and deeper into her martyrdom. Not that she wished to be left altogether alone with her aunt and her books and lectures and the American colony. . . . Heaven forbid! Not that she did not enjoy the opportunity of getting at the source of local flavour;—she even knew a few people who were both enlightening and charming.

Susanna Moore's

But why all these little incursions and intrusions into her privacy; could they not be made to cease? . . .

Could these continual questions from all sides, personal and general, intimate and objective, questions concerning things she knew nothing about and things she wished no one else to know anything about—could they not be made to cease? . . . And these continual annoyances on the streets that made walking almost impossible . . . And those incredible young men at the University who accosted her, and addressed her and followed her and sent letters and poems to her . . . That fair and fat one of yesterday, for instance, who had followed her in a red cap on the side of the top of his head and a burstingly tight overcoat and a fancy cane in his yellow-gloved hand . . . He had followed her up the Linden by first rushing ahead, then turning and passing her again, or waiting at a shopwindow for her to pass him, cocking his head at her, then rushing ahead again and repeating this performance ad infinitum. Her sense of humour had survived just long enough to suggest the resemblance of his tactics to those of a dog, then it had gone under in a tide of indignation and distaste. For a moment it had bobbed up again upon their arrival here, at the hotel, into which the canine student had brazenly followed her, and having no legitimate reason had been obliged to invent one, which had cost him several marks,—the equivalent of a luncheon.—Hateful man, hateful street; hateful, hateful hotel, hateful everything! . . .

Susanna lay in bed uttering little snorts and sighs of anger, and making inchoate little gestures of pushing and kicking objects out of the way. And in imagination she was in fact doing something of the kind. For she invented—as a satisfactory solution of the preceding drama—a huge iron hand attached to her own, with which she proceeded to throw the student's red cap, eye-glasses, orange and black ribbon and cane into an abyss, and then to set his remaining person in a cage, where it walked about on all fours. Until, finding even this caged and controlled presence unbearable, she had the iron hand drop him, cage and all, into the abyss, too.

If these occurrences continued, she told herself, she would soon lose her sense of humour and her amiability and naturalness, besides her peacefulness. . . . She was already walking the streets in a state of anxiety and watchfulness, thinking of nothing but how to elude the misadventures that lurked all about ready to

Love Days

attack her.— Susanna threw herself on her side, and decided that it was time to think of something pleasant.

The most pleasant thing, of course, in her life was her future, but it was strenuous to think about, and, her immersion in the present having left her somewhat devitalized, she contented herself with her second best: the past. She started to think of her pleasant friendships and friends. Of Blanche and Anna and Virginia and Ella, and of Lucius and Alfred and Tom, and the rest. Tom was the easiest to think about. . . . She hadn't written to him in an age, not since she was in Berlin, and before that—When had she written last? . . . What a shame she did not remember, while he had been so faithful about writing, he who hated to write as much as she liked it. Not that he didn't know how! He wrote rather well, in fact; only too formally. He compressed the individuality of his thinking into a form he derived from somewhere or other ready-made, one that like a ready-made garment fitted him only approximately.

What ought to be the case, Susanna continued to cogitate, is that one ought to create not only one's own thoughts, but the forms of their expression, as the bee creates its wax and its honey, its home and its nourishment,—all out of itself. . . . But we are more like the birds than the bees—: we build our nests with picked-up sticks and straws produced by others, and feathers shed by others. And we nourish ourselves with foreign bodies. And birds eat several times their bulk during the day, and so, in a spiritual sense, do we. And with us—as with them, the birds—this foreign matter issues as waste. . . . We cannot digest it,—we do not even try to digest it—: we decorate our minds with it, as we decorate our faces with powder, but it won't stick,—it issues as waste.

Susanna, here, in the course of her digestive image, suddenly realized that she was hungry, and promptly pulled a large red tassel dangling above her and concealing in its interior a bell that connected her with Bridget.—Breakfast was, at worst, a bright spot in the gloomy procedure of daily happenings. The coffee would be poor, but the rolls and butter were always good and the honey delicious, and usually there were letters on the tray. But breakfast was far off, after the bath, after the dressing, after the coiffure— Susanna had a sudden inspiration.

She opened her eyes, looked at her watch, and grabbed the

Susanna Moore's

bell-rope once more. This time Bridget responded promptly, bustling in busily.

"Goodmorning to you, Miss Susan," she cried, "it's early this morning, that's why I'm late! Here, now, here's your wrapper, Miss Susan. Wait now till I close the window on you."

"Hold up, Bridget," Susanna drawled, "I'm going to breakfast in bed."

"Breakfast in bed, before your bath and all, is it?" cried Bridget, incredulous.

"It isn't verboten, is it? I shan't be arrested for *lèse régularité*, shall I? Yes, I'll have breakfast in bed, and I won't get up until I feel like it and perhaps I'll never get up again, while I'm in Berlin!"

"And aren't you feeling well, then, this morning, Miss Susan?"

"No, I'm not. Too much Berlin."

"Well now, Miss Susan," and the dam burst, "and didn't I tell you how I couldn't see how you could stand it here in this old hotel without a single convenience, and with all these Germans here. Why, only this morning that impoudent Jo Han says to me—"

"Have him in to heat the oven!" Susanna interrupted. "And hurry up, Bridgie, I'm hungry! I'll get under the covers in the meantime, and he won't notice I'm here. And leave the window wide open."

"Very well then, Miss Susan," Bridget mumbled, disapproving and disappointed—: Berlin was continuing, after all.

While what she again inferred with certainty was Johan engaged in heating the oven, Susanna lay under the covers. From the oven side of the room she formed an elongated hump, but viewed from the window side she resembled nothing so much as Guido Reni's Mary Magdalene, lying so prettily and snugly in her cave. Susanna, however, was looking out from her bed-cave at the English legation opposite, at one of whose upper windows an ornament of the institution was shaving himself in his night shirt or some other unusually intimate fragment of clothing. She was following his performance with uplifted eyes, and anyone seeing the profound melancholy of her expression, might well have gathered that she was witnessing the last moments of some great tragedy. She was, however, only reflecting that men were ugly; that men in *déshabillé* were ugly; even Englishmen in *déshabillé* were

Love Days

ugly; shaving was ugly; views from bedroom windows were ugly; views into bedroom windows were ugly; noises from ovens were ugly; odours were ugly;—life was ugly. And capitulating to the invading feeling of disgust she closed her eyes, and again sank down. And as Mary Magdalene reclined in her rocky cave, enveloped in her golden hair, repenting of her own imperfections, so Susanna lay in her cave of silk and linen, enveloped in her copper hair, regretting the imperfections of the particular spot of time and space in which she found herself.

Indeed, when in the course of time breakfast arrived, it dragged her out and up from the very deepest depths of refusal. Up to an at least temporary acceptance of facts,—of sustenance, at least,—of coffee, rolls and honey. But even this minimum she accepted with knitted brow and heavy resignation; and looking over and observing none but local stamps on the mail that accompanied her coffee, she left it untouched until breakfasting was consummated. She, then, with continuing depression, opened some advertisements, a bill for a hat too ugly to wear, and a few invitations: Herr und Frau . . . Mittagessen, um 8 Uhr . . . ; unsuitable German expressions replacing the *à propos*, but no longer fashionable, French ones. And finally there was a very thick envelope, which, when opened, revealed a many paged anonymous letter of the sentimental variety.

Susanna, who was in no state to be amused at anything at all, glanced at the first page, skipped the intervening 7 or 8, and read the end, where experience had taught her to look for any salient points the letter might contain. This particular correspondent's salient points she found to be communicated in a plan he proposed, whose object it was to break his anonymity—in case it should prove worth while. He suggested that Susanna, if willing to enter into an acquaintance whose desirability the preceding pages had no doubt pointed out, should hold her handkerchief in her right hand when walking through the long hall at twelve o'clock to Berger's lecture. Her handkerchief in her other hand would be interpreted by him as a sign of her lack of understanding for his romantic urge.

Susanna crumpled her nose, and decided that were it possible she would consent to be without a nose for a time rather than use a handkerchief. This new young man was even spoiling natural processes for her, she reflected gloomily, doubting whether

Susanna Moore's

in the confines of the University handkerchiefs would ever again feel entirely her own, and tossing the letter aside.

"Bridget," she announced, "I wish you would find out from the servants where there is a rubber store and go there and buy me a rubber bath. In future I am going to bathe in here by the oven, English style." For she had suddenly resolved never to enter the aquatic vault again. "And today," she continued "I won't bathe at all; I'll just wash a little." And she felt that somehow in refusing to wash adequately she had given peculiarly suitable expression to her sentiment about her daily routine, and that this wash-strike registered and, in registering, relieved her of her most acute feeling of protest.

She got up.

An hour later Susanna was walking down the Linden, chaperoned by Bridget, who was of middle age and of uncompromising dignity.

The day, like most of its companions, was chilly and grey, and now and then the penetrating dampness crystallized into a few languid and dissipated flakes of snow. People were nevertheless strolling along the Linden. Susanna thought of them as strolling, because she compared their leisurely pace with that of the hustling and rushing multitudes of New York. Off the Linden, in the side streets, in the Friedrichstrasse especially, the tempo and the density of the passing crowd were to be sure far greater, yet even here people seemed, on the whole, to be walking for their diversion and not merely as a means of reaching an appointment. Particularly did this seem true of the men. Many of them swung canes which were still a source of obvious gratification to them; others devoted time and attention to the manipulation of moustache and monocle, and all of them, with and without conceits of accoutrement, had time for prolonged stares at female passers-by inclusive of the Bridget-chaperoned Susanna.

Susanna, being depressed, was in one of her sufficiently rare philosophic moods. She contemplated the blackish individual spots and the blackish groups of people and the patterns they made ambling along the wide grey Linden, and contemplated the more or less ancient solid and squat houses that lined it. Ancient, at any rate, in comparison with Fifth Avenue. To be sure, modern shops were here; people were here; business was

Love Days

here. . . . Yet, she thought, what a contrast to New York! Berlin: the embodiment of the static, the finished, the permanent, of immemorial—of, so to say, immortal—form, in a word, of being. . . . New York: the material embodiment of change, of motion, of the flux of life itself, of the fluidity of its constant readjustment. . . . What a comfort in New York to know and feel that hardly any of its buildings would outlive yourself and your generation. . . . That, for instance, when the Plaza Hotel was antiquated it would inevitably give birth to another, newer Plaza Hotel, and die usefully.

Here Susanna's thoughts divagated from their main channel into a tributary. This Plaza method of reproduction struck her as a new and charming one, and she dwelt on it. How agreeable it would be to give birth to a new Susanna, when she, analogously to the Plaza, would be antiquated and ready to fall to pieces and die. . . . Then indeed, why not die in the social usefulness of successful childbirth. . . .

Susanna smiled: she was continually astonished at her ease in bettering nature's arrangements. . . . At this moment she was indeed completely charmed by her latest idea, and pleasantly absorbed in a consideration of whether, in this style of automatic propagation in the final dissolution of death, the male element should not be involved at all, or be contained hermaphroditically, so to say, or should have its emotional place and rôle as in the actual scheme, with, as it were, retarded physical action. . . . Her own inclination was towards the first arrangement, pending better acquaintance with the second, but her judgment was pressed upon by the observed tendencies of—

"Sweet child, you please me," a voice whispered loudly in her ear, the voice's breath tickling it.

Susanna jumped, and pulled away toward Bridget, having had a glimpse of a fur collar, an elderly beard, gold eye-glasses and a silk hat.

"Turn around and glare at him, Bridget, or he'll follow us," she ordered, an order which Bridget executed with pleasurable alacrity and thoroughness. And fortunately Bridget's native authority was reinforced by a tailor suit from Macy's, a hat from Gimbel's, furs from Saks', shoes from the Sorosis, and a face from the Lake of Killarney, all of which gave her an air, here in Berlin, of belonging to a rank, if somewhat below that of Ge-

Susanna Moore's

heimraethin, certainly well above that of Kommerzienraethin.

"The old beast, the old divvel," she muttered, "and all dressed up like a gentleman.—Did you ever see the likes of these here men!"

"Exactly—that's why I want to be a Plaza Hotel."

"Yes, even their hotels—" Bridget took up the thread. "That one we're in now—think of our having to go shopping for a tub now!" And Bridget made full use of her first opportunity to air her views about Berliners to the younger of her employers. And not one of them was not fully developed, ready for delivery, and entirely unfavourable. Susanna, in fact, thought to detect in them a certain quality of mellow fluency generated by continual use only, like the quality that, for instance, a pig-skin purse acquires from friction and exposure. Over exposure of views, she summed up, imagining and picturing Bridget's during-dinner English speeches to her table companions in the servant's hall.

"Never mind, Bridgie; it will soon be over."

"I thought as we intended being here until April or so, Miss Susan?"

"Yes—but probably we shan't. You never can tell—neither can I," Susanna replied vaguely.

Bridget's protection having proved illusory, Susanna's attention was now directed to locating—and before they could become active, discouraging—men with silk hats, beards and other dangerous symptoms. In order to do this effectively she was obliged to dismiss all private thoughts, all feelings, and the greater part of her sensations. She became fatigued and dejected again.

Suddenly she turned about. "I'm going to the University. Auntie will shop for me when she comes back."

Arrived at the University, she traversed the broad court, entered the main corridor filled with warm, stuffy air and crowded with students, and went down the narrow corridor of one of the side wings to the caretaker's apartment. Her progress was attended by the interest and silent comment of hundreds of men students, a fact of which she was entirely aware, although her perfectly self-possessed, free, springy and yet relaxed seventeen-year-old walk gave no intimation of it.

In the room reserved for "studying ladies" she divested her-

Love Days

self of her moleskin coat and hat according to regulations. She emerged therefrom in a tan cloth gown, straight and close, revealing herself to anyone without a blind spot for such matters as a New York Minerva—a Minerva, not only because of her learning but also, and chiefly, because of her costly clothes. For as the hardness of Minerva's clothes protected Minerva so did the elegance of Susanna's protect Susanna, like a veritable armour, against what she was so fatally exposed to here: promiscuous adventures. Indeed, striking visually against these cunningly wrought gowns of perfect fashionableness, glances about to be shot, conversational assaults about to be launched faltered, weakened, recoiled and shattered. Even hopes themselves died at their inception when confronted by these formidable barriers,—symbols of class distinction, or, accepted as such.—What Susanna would have had to endure arrayed in average local garments, Minerva herself would have trembled to envisage.

A number of ladies were resting in the cloakroom. All of them were strangers to Susanna with the exception of Miss Bumstead, a student of philology from Illinois, Iowa, or somewhere. For Susanna was still weakminded regarding geographical location; she not only failed to remember places with which she had no personal connection, but she somehow never seemed to have known them in the first place. The only occasion on which these unknown localities, as a fact, made any connection with herself, were those in which an exhibition of her ignorance about them called forth looks of pained or amused astonishment. And the unpleasantness of these moments Susanna considered the price she paid for immunity from knowledge, and she thought the price small.

Miss Bumstead was physically the kind of squat little person usually called a "body," perhaps because the body through relative size has become relatively conspicuous. Her type, with its fresh-skinned round face, black-lashed blue eyes and straight brown hair pulled severely back in a little knot, was as peasant-like, Susanna thought, as the female of the American species could ever become. Miss Bumstead had stepped from Iowa, Ohio, or Illinois straight into a small South-German University town containing a famous classical scholar. Here she had undergone vicissitudes of such magnitude that she was unable to refrain from confiding them to Susanna, her only available audi-

Susanna Moore's

ence. Indeed, anyone less completely preoccupied than was Miss Bumstead with her troubling experience would have been fatally discouraged from confidences by the character of Susanna's interest, which manifested itself in a certain languid desire for information, but which never made the slightest progress toward blossoming into that flower of perfect sympathy and complete approval so inexorably demanded by the confiding party.

Miss Bumstead had, then, to her indignant amazement, found the elderly and renowned philologist's interest in herself wholly amorous, and had moreover found his amorousness not at all in conformity with that sentimental and half-abstract brand which she had been led to believe was the brand locally current. Rather did it seem to be a species basically realistic, with a superimposed and superficial decorative pattern of the sentimental.

"Mephisto and Werther mixed," Susanna had put in at this point, after absorbing the description.

"Werther nothing!" Miss Bumstead had snapped.

"But the flowers, and the poetic allusions!" Susanna had reminded her.

"Poetic allusion, indeed—comparing me to Amalie of the Wahlverwandtschaft, the one who—" and Miss Bumstead launched forth again in an indignant report of what Amalie had committed, and what, in consequence, Professor X. apparently had expected her to commit.

"Well, Goethe anyway," Susanna, thinking to see the light, insisted, "and indeed, Goethe himself! Don't you see? Don't you see that Goethe's example has surely made a profound impression on all elderly Germans of culture,—particularly writers, excellencies and Geheimraethe, all of which Goethe was, and all of which your Professor is or aspires to be. Don't you see, Miss Bumstead, how it would be?" Susanna had now become enthusiastic over her intuitional idea and was temporarily enthralled if not convinced by its plausibility. She hurried on: "Instead of in Platonic love, these old men indulge in Goetheonic love, also of an ideal rather than a real character: a kind of imaginary relationship modelled as closely as possible on one of Goethe's collection, with the object of fooling themselves. . . Yes, of fooling themselves not so much into believing themselves in love, as believing themselves Goethe!"

Miss Bumstead, who was receiving this interpretation with dis-

Love Days

tinct displeasure, here attempted to interrupt. But Susanna, the light of creative inspiration in her eyes, continued uninterruptibly: "So when Professor X. saw you, immediately the possibility of once more feeling like Goethe presented itself to his emotionally enfeebled and tired old frame,—I mean head. He used every means known to him: he sent you flowers, he told you that you recalled Amalie, and that he felt amorous like Goethe; he wrote you a poem, probably in Goethe's style, and he suggested further developments—: all these measures nothing in themselves, only means to the end of feeling himself a God-like old man like Goethe!"

Here Susanna had paused under the influence of a new idea that had insinuated itself suddenly into her mind. Miss Bumstead, it now became as clear as day, with her squat, plain, applely, fresh person, bore a striking resemblance to Goethe's Christine, and none whatsoever to the patrician Amalie. Professor X. must then have made this substitution in a spirit of gallantry. Immediately Susanna felt a certain sympathy with the old gentleman:—she was kindled by a desire to rehabilitate him completely. She had now in mind to try to convince Miss Bumstead that his interest in her was not even vicariously amorous, so to say, but purely literary: that in her he was paying homage to one of the loves of the great national poet, on whom he, and all Germany, still nourished themselves emotionally,—at least in their less hungry moments.

Before this could be contrived, however, Miss Bumstead had taken advantage of Susanna's pause to remark: "It's all very well to take it humorously, Miss Moore, but how would you feel about it if it had happened to you?"

Susanna stared, and flushed a little. "Happen to me—why, it couldn't happen to me—; such things never happen to me, I mean," she corrected herself, aware of some tactlessness; "they just don't happen to me.—It's strange, I suppose," she added in a spirit of conciliation, "but really, you know, somehow, I never have anything of the kind happen to me!" She was dying to add "probably because I don't look like the Vulpis," but she refrained.

"Well, you are followed on the streets, and molested here in the University, so I don't see why it shouldn't happen to you as well as to me," said Miss Bumstead, who now desired it to hap-

Susanna Moore's

pen to Susanna, since Susanna so obviously regarded it as undesirable to the point of impossible.

"Oh, that's different," Susanna, who no longer was enjoying the conversation, had replied. "All those things happen before people know me; never after. They happen to my visual self, not to my real self. Imagine Professor X.—"

But Miss Bumstead had no desire to hear about Susanna's lack of serious trouble; what she desired was to reveal completely and impressively the magnitude of her own. "I shall bring his letters tomorrow, and then you will see what I was up against in Z—and why I had to leave. It's put me back a whole year, having had to leave just as my thesis was taking shape. And now . . ." and back she was in her lamentations.

This morning Susanna and Miss Bumstead's conversation was entirely casual, confining itself to the weather, the lectures and so forth. On Susanna's part, in fact, it confined itself even more stringently—namely to listening. For she was still depressed and listless, and therefore, although she disagreed with half of what Miss Bumstead remarked, she uttered a series of trouble-sparing "yesses."

Ten minutes before twelve the two girls walked down the crowded corridors together, to the Literature D. class-room. On the way they met Miss Smith from Columbus, Ohio, who stopped to chat with them for a moment. Susanna availed herself of this opportunity to wipe her nose, and only after she had terminated the short act did she gradually become conscious of some ulterior significance attaching to this otherwise so uninterestingly mechanical act, a significance whose exact character kept escaping her, until suddenly the laws of association functioned successfully and the handkerchief-letter recurred to her. Simultaneously she became aware of the presence of her handkerchief in her left hand. Whipping it into her pocket she tried to remember whether the left hand was the symbol of acceptance or refusal, and glanced into the crowd furtively to see whether any damage had been done and further results were to be expected. And although she detected nothing immediately pending, she thought it safer to rush to the lecture hall, and so, accordingly, she did.

Throughout this performance Susanna was aware, theoretically

Love Days

aware, that the whole episode was unusually funny;—and yet it had quite failed to amuse her. It had indeed almost failed to rouse her at all: she had gone through her hurried actions in a mechanical fashion and without any change in her sad and abstracted expression. Being amused by it would have meant that she had accepted it as her experience; and she hadn't; she had rejected it. She had rejected it, but it had nevertheless annoyed her intensely.

In the safe harbour of the class-room she now tried to concentrate on Professor Berger's words, which dealt with Greek prosody. But again she failed. She was, to be sure, still receptive to external stimuli, for not a sniff nor cough nor hem nor haw of the professor, who had a cold, escaped her; but she remained impervious to the intellectual burden of his words. Her suffering mind, she concluded, was closed to all but the perception of further opportunities for suffering. . . .

She next tried to concentrate on the suffering itself, but she found that she could not accomplish even this. The suffering was too diffuse, too vague; it was like a smear of air-tight varnish; it lay over all her other states, and kept them from her.—So she sat inert, as she thought, awaiting some new portion of suffering, which, indeed, promptly arrived.

It arrived together with her gradual apprehension of suppressed giggling on the part of some students seated in her row; giggling ensuing upon strange actions of a man seated directly in front of her. This large stout man with a very white, bad skin, and watery eyes, and a fatuous expression, had begun to turn completely around, first smiling blandly at Susanna, then peering interestedly at something one of her neighbours was drawing on a pad, and then turning again smilingly to Susanna.

Susanna was appalled; she was appalled at this new impertinence, but even more than at this was she appalled at the nearness of his ugly face. She was so appalled, indeed, that she was now rendered inert for a long moment. . . . It was not until the face changed places with the back of the head for the third time that the inertia snapped, Susanna rose, letting her seat fly back with a great bang, brushed past the knees intervening between herself and the door, and disregarding the great Berger, and his theories, and Greek theories, and all else, threw open the exit door and let it fall to after her with another great resounding bang.

Susanna Moore's

She hurried along the corridor, oblivious of everything but a feeling of temporary liberation. For she was away from that latest agony anyway—: not only the growing distance between them, but each moment, and the so satisfying and convincing slams of door and desk had helped remove it further.

"Fräulein Moore, Fräulein Moore—," and a co-student, Fräulein Kurz, puffing but explosive, caught up with Susanna. "Ist Ihnen wohl schlecht? Was haben Sie, um Gottes willen?" The good soul had softly (of course) followed Susanna from the class-room to minister to her in an emergency which she felt must be extreme to have produced such behaviour on the part of the soft and elegant Miss Moore; and also, and chiefly, to find out what it was.

"Very, very 'schlecht', thank you," Susanna called, breaking into a run, and slamming the partition door, which she reached first, regardless of the proximity of the amazed and thwarted Frl. Kurz.

Rushing on into the cloakroom, Susanna snatched her belongings from the hanger, jammed them on and again passed the not yet completely discouraged Frl. Kurz who was again arriving on the scene with new breathless questions; passed her without recognition; passed hordes of staring students; passed, on the streets, hordes of staring pedestrians;—passed them with her head in the air and a look of tranced determination in her starry eyes. For she was conscious that she was now no longer merely suffering things, that she was acting,—that something was acting below the suffering. And although she was acting with no positive end in view, since her successful escape from the fourth edition of the face and the inquisitive Frl. Kurz, she felt nevertheless that there were several ends imbedded somewhere in the future which she might dig out with the energy she had somehow rescued from its consumption in pure suffering.

Arrived at the hotel she flew upstairs without waiting for the leisurely lift, and flew into the salon.— And here the spotted brown walls and the dusty red plush and the laundered white lace received her; received her like a pall; and the little flame of her revived activity cooled and sputtered and was almost extinguished.

With what was left, Susanna pulled the bell-rope vigorously and continuously until, after a long time, the dejected floor-waiter

Love Days

arrived. He arrived in a trot down the hall, filled, perhaps, with the hope that the house was on fire, and finding himself duped, took Susanna's lunch order, crumpled up once more in spirit as his shirtfront was in fact, muttering unenthusiastic "schöns."

"Schön—schlecht, schlecht—schön" rang through Susanna's head as she went to her dismal bedroom to get ready for luncheon. "Mir ist schlecht, ich bin schön, ich bin schön, mir ist schelecht."—She sat down in front of the gilt mirror and removed her hat and patted her hair and scrutinized her face to see whether it needed powdering. It did not.

"I am so schön that I look neither like the Vulpius nor Amalie, and no old Professors have tried to make love to me, only street-walkers and unhealthy students and unknown Reichstagsabgeordnete while they 'schlürf' their potato soup." Thus she addressed her cream and copper image, while she decided to devote herself to a consideration of the future during luncheon, since in the process of being nourished it might prove easier to rise from this depression to the heights of thinking.

Luncheon, yes, luncheon. . . . Just she and luncheon within four walls into which no one could possibly enter. . . . Tête-à-tête with luncheon in peace and security she would surely be able to grasp some of the ideas that were eluding her so easily at present. And she lazily pictured the coming situation as herself seated before the tray of silver casseroles, and whitish steam escaping from them, and beyond the steam plans and ideas floating about, which, as soon as she turned her full attention on them, would concentrate and become real. . . . Yet she knew that this was itself but symbolism born of mental sloth. . . . But since the sloth was born of suffering—

In due time—the waiter having come and gone—Susanna did sit before her silver casseroles, tête-à-tête with them in the silent red and brown salon. She uncovered the largest of them, and there issued from it not only the anticipated steam, but along with it, and much more powerfully, the odour of sauerkraut, which, with its relatives, pork and mashed potatoes, happened to be resting in its depths. Susanna nodded her head with the emphasis of a Buddha: "Mir ist schlecht, ich bin schön, schön schön; mir ist schlecht, schlecht, schlecht—", and she lay back contemplating her vis-à-vis gravely for some moments. But after the first shock of impact it seemed quite right and appropriate that this particular

Susanna Moore's

dish should be the one to arrive; it was, in fact, in perfect accord with all else that arrived today. There had indeed not been a single discordant note in the monotonous dirge of the morning, save the bare consciousness that there was a way out of everything if one had energy enough to perceive it;—out of the bathroom, out of the class-room, out of Frä. Kurz' interest, and now—out of this pork.

Susanna thought herself almost inspired to have connected the way out of this latest thing with the bell-rope, as she slowly rose and pulled it. Why, here she had already grasped a brilliant idea and was carrying it out,—the idea of how to evade this latest calamity. After all, it must have been just beyond the steam, she told herself, safely balanced between laughing and crying. And if sauerkraut-and-pork steam supplied her with an idea, how entirely safe it was, then, to leave the arrival of the others to the steam of beefsteak and beans, which she presently ordered from the waiter when, in the course of events, he, too, arrived.

"Beafsteak and string-beans!" the dejected waiter remonstrated; neither beafsteak nor beans were on today's bill of ready fare, and they would not only take 20 minutes to prepare, but would cost extra. The Miss perhaps thought it would be substituted for the pork, but it would not: it would cost extra!—And having delivered this information, he crumpled up again in the doorway waiting to hear that the pork and sauerkraut would be eaten after all, as they should be.

"Beafsteak and beans, and 'schnell'!" Susanna shouted firmly and pushed the door closed on him.—Another action, and the third in the door-shutting series, she reflected, well satisfied with herself for the moment.

In the meanwhile, the sauerkraut and pork, having remained behind in the salon, still gave forth, undiscouraged, a little steam and more aroma. And again Susanna sat tête-à-tête in intimacy with them. But even pork and sauerkraut were bearable when defeated: indeed, now that she had got the better of them, she found that she felt quite kindly towards them—towards all of them but their aroma, as girls feel towards their rejected suitors, or as the Germans towards the French after 1871.

But, she asked herself, did she feel as tolerant towards the face and the bath, and all the rest she had successfully escaped from? No, she did not. And why not, she wondered? She pondered. . . . Because all of these, of course, unlike the pork and sauerkraut,

Love Days

were likely to recur!—Was there then any way out of all this deadening annoyance short of leaving Berlin, or was there not? she finally put to herself. The desirability of leaving had, since its first ideational occurrence this morning, been in the background of her mind continually, but face to face with it she had now to consider what such a step would mean in terms of her work. And to clarify this situation was precisely what, in her really depressed and discouraged state of mind, she was quite unable to accomplish.

All at once it became apparent to her, however, that even if she was unable to determine whether or not it was necessary to leave Berlin, one definite fact had been established: it was entirely *possible* to leave Berlin, and that at any moment she chose to do so. No material obstacles interfered, nor would her aunt object; quite on the contrary.—

And with this certitude Susanna felt the weight of her bad humour lift considerably: she now really felt that she might safely let further conclusions on her position and its remedy, and ultimate decisions, gradually sift through her lessening mood, lessening since she was no longer oppressed by the necessity of coming to a swift decision together with her inability to do so.

After luncheon she got to work, and she soon managed to detach herself from her troubles by plunging deep into her research, an investigation of certain Greek verse forms. Working, she was no longer either happy or unhappy; she was personally submerged; she existed only as mind, as instrument. As an individual she had become as non-existent—for herself at least—as one becomes in dreamless sleep. And like dreamless sleep, so intellectual work rested her inactive soul, and when, after some hours, she emerged from her study, she emerged in a calmer and freer mood. She was, perhaps, still disaffected; still expecting to make use of the realized possibility of fleeing from this fountain-head of the unpleasant; but her extreme depression no longer filled her: it had dropped from the top to the depths of her consciousness, as though it had sunk by its very weight, by its constantly accruing weight, into the profundities, leaving space on the top for other states.

At any rate, Susanna was equal to receiving Fräulein Paula Bayer, when she, in the course of the afternoon, arrived to deliver a German lesson to Susanna. An energetic small person, very

Susanna Moore's

positive, self assured and self righteous, Frl. Bayer by profession was a teacher in a "superior" school for girls, where she held a very superior position for one of her tender years. She was now taking courses at the University to supplement not the education of those she educated but her own, and here Susanna had spoken with her, had been struck by her fine North-German speech, and lessons had been arranged for. This was the fourth.

Frl. Bayer blew in like a warmish snow-storm—wettily, heavily, stodgily.

"Ach, Miss Moore, you must forgive me for being five minutes late; I shall of course make them up joyfully at the end of the lesson. I tore my skirt, that is, the braid on the inside. Where shall I then put my galoshes and my umbrella, please?"

Frl. Bayer always entered the room with all her possessions, and while the ones she mentioned made little puddles on the floor she looked around with elaborate helplessness. The reason for her helplessness, and for her lack of conscience about what ordinarily she would have considered unpardonable,—the puddling,—was the complete absence of an umbrella stand inside or outside the room. This omission she judged to be a social fault so extreme that any results, however reprehensible, flowing from it, were excusable, nay, were desirable as necessary conditions for its correction. So she asked quite sternly and excitedly: "Where shall I then put my galoshes and my umbrella, please?"

Susanna, who had been watching the puddle become and grow, reflecting how harmonious it was with the carpet of variegated mud shades on which it reposed and the chenille table cover which hung down towards it longingly, replied: "Oh put them on the table or on the mantel or wherever you think they'd like it."

"Ach, but this is not your seriousness, Miss Moore!" Frl. Bayer exclaimed, annoyed at being trifled with. "There is namely really missing an umbrella stand in this otherwise so beautifully furnished room."

Susanna rang for Bridget to dispose of the articles, while asking her teacher (and introducing German into the lesson): "You really find this room 'schön eingerichtet', then?"

"Well, not perhaps beautiful so much as solidly comfortable, and *very homelike*. In it one at once feels at one's ease and at home, and that surely is a great merit. It is easy enough," continued Frl. Bayer brightly and informatively, warming to her

Love Days

subject “—it is easy enough to go to a great emporium of furniture and order the latest note of modernity. And I am not saying that our modern Art Nouveau furnishing has not great merit. The great hotels on the Linden perhaps do this; your American hotels, owing to the comparative youth of your Civilization, are no doubt obliged to resort to this materialistic way of furnishing themselves, but how much more the spirit of home is conserved in these old solidly conservative hotels. Take this room for instance: the aristocratic-bourgeois—the patrician—spirit is here expressed.”

Frl. Bayer was now seated at the chenille table opposite Susanna; upright, in a starched blouse, and with a black felt hat, flying a wing made of wine-coloured violets, on her lightish brown hair which stuck in strands except where it lay flat around her head in braids in Tyrolean peasant style, a style she had warmly recommended, unsolicited, to Susanna.

Susanna's eyes, that so charmingly looked as though they saw nothing, but got lost in the spaces between themselves and their object, examined Frl. Bayer during her pronouncement and reported to Susanna that she most uncannily resembled a spider, a propædæutic spider, minded to sting her opinions into helpless victims, if they could not be introduced in any more agreeable manner.— Susanna cut short the lecture: “Yes, yes, you are quite right Frl. Bayer; but let's do some translation, I find I learn more in that way.”

The girls had been engrossed for less than half an hour in the task of finding the German equivalent for Gilbert Murray's prose, when Bridget brought Susanna a note marked “important.” Susanna, excusing herself, opened it, and finding it to be in German, spread it out over Gilbert Murray, and using it as an exercise, read it to Frl. Bayer, slowly, distinctly and in her best accent.

“Honoured Fräulein,”—she read—“I did not catch your meaning this morning. The handkerchief changed hands too often, and disappeared before I could ascertain with certainty in which it had longest reposed. Did this procedure perhaps signify a certain indecision; or did you perhaps mean to play with me in a spirit of coquetry, tantalizing One? Do not continue to trifle even gracefully, gracious One, with the so sincere feeling that you have aroused in my breast,—it is one worthy of any woman's appreciation. I am at
60

Susanna Moore's

this very moment, when your beautiful grey-blue-black eyes rest intimately on the script of my humble hand, walking beneath your window, patiently and yet impatiently, filled with dreams of you. I have, by the way, done this every day for ten days, and rarely, only too rarely, have I been rewarded by a sight of your Titian locks. Only too often it was what I have ascertained to be your honoured Aunt, who looked out upon me, or at least upon the street.— If you desire now to give to your humble slave a sign of your favour, as the high hopes in his breast would seem to guarantee, part the curtains and reveal yourself to your alas, hitherto unknown, admirer

X. Y. Z.

P. S. He hopes with assurance that you will find him not entirely displeasing to you."

"Ach, Gott!" cried Frl. Bayer, upon its conclusion, giggling, "how romantic! A little boyish, to be sure, but romantic! At this very moment he is down below, making you a window-promenade! No, but we must see that!"

"Hold on!" And Susanna grabbed the rising Frl. Bayer—"Please be sure not to disturb the curtains. If you must look, please peep from back of the lace."

Frl. Bayer was already doing so.

"But now, which one—let me see— Oh yes, of course, that will be he—opposite—Yes, that is he, that is he, that is surely he!"

Susanna suddenly realized that she had a headache: the that-is-hes in Frl. Bayer's fine contralto voice pierced her like a shriek. She sat at the table with her chin in her palm, waiting for the next assault on her nerves, aware that she was for the moment vulnerable only physically.

"Yes surely that is he, that surely is he, who just stood still and looked up! Ach, but a very elegant young man, one must admit! 'Zwar' very young—hardly any moustache yet,—but very elegant a great deal of 'Schneid!' But do come to see, Miss Moore—he cannot see you, it is quite safe— Dark-blond, fine eyes, an elegant cane—He is walking on—Poor boy!"

Frl. Bayer returned to the table, eying Susanna suspiciously. "He does not seem to interest you; what was that about the handkerchief to which he referred?"

"He wrote me a letter like this one yesterday, and asked me to signal at the University with my handkerchief," Susanna recounted in careful and choice German.

Love Days

"Ach, a student, then! And what happened?"

"I forgot about it, and nothing, therefore, and also for other reasons, happened."

"So, so . . . Well, these romantic episodes no doubt happen to you often as 'Ausländerin.' That is the trouble with us Germans, we are so easily impressed by all that is foreign. It seems to have a special charm for us, not at all because of any superiority over us, but merely because it comes from far away! So are the English never: on the contrary, the English—"

Susanna interrupted this sociological theory in which she had been instructed many times by many persons during her month in Berlin—: "Tell me, Frä. Bayer, don't you find it at all impertinent for strange men to address anonymous letters to you, and walk below your windows and follow you on the streets?"

"Ach but no; you understand badly! It is, on the contrary, meant as a great compliment." Frä. Bayer settled herself into her instructing position, and Susanna wondered whether she had hitherto taught infants only. "We Germans, you must be told, are a very sentimental and romantic race, and besides this, highly temperamental. You Americans are known to be cold. You cannot, of course, be expected right away to understand how in the profundities of the German temperament all the traditional German ideas of chivalry and woman-worship still live, and play their part, and cause our young men to 'boil up' in pure emotion! In America, I suppose, such a spectacle of a youth walking up and down, up and down, before the domicile of the fair unknown, would be ridiculous, as you seem to think it. Here it is but an expression of national sentiment."

Frä. Bayer tossed her chin in the air, and looked at Susanna condescendingly, and then peered over in the direction of the last appearance of national sentiment.

Susanna still sat dejectedly with her chin in her palm. She found Frä. Bayer easy but the world hard to understand. "And what would *you* do about this particular expression of the racial sentiment?" she asked, willing to be informed.

Frä. Bayer blushed and bridled, and checked a movement she had made towards the window. "Mein Gott, how do I know! It would no doubt depend on my mood," she continued, with a good deal of that sophistry which she considered logic. "The value of these experiences lies in what they symbolize, as I have explained

Susanna Moore's

to you, in what one gets out of them in a purely 'ideal' way. Whether anything will result in a practical sense or not, ach Gott, who can tell in the abstract. . . . One must always consider the individual case."

And Frl. Bayer felt that she had acquitted herself very well; but she also felt that it would not now be appropriate to peep out again from her lofty attitude, so she was nevertheless displeased.

"For you as an American our German chivalry must, of course, be quite a new experience; perhaps even one in the nature of a shock," she ended sarcastically and with finality, fingering the volume of Gilbert Murray.

"Quite so," Susanna agreed. "And, by the way, Frl. Bayer, I am sorry to tell you that I shan't be able to take any more lessons from you for the present. I shall probably have to leave Berlin, and even if I don't I shall be too busy with my work to continue."

"Ach, aber, Miss Moore, what do you say! So suddenly! Yes, but why? How awful to leave Berlin! You poorest One!" and Frl. Bayer was really so profoundly sorry for Susanna, that she forgot to think of the deprivation it would be for herself, although it was a real deprivation, and meant that she would have to forego the extra concert or play or pair of gloves or coffee-caddy that her so agreeable instruction in the language and culture of her country was making possible.

"Yes, appalling, I poorest One!" Susanna drawled.

"Yes, but why then," exploded Frl. Bayer, "when it is so important for you to work here, why all of a sudden must you depart?"

Susanna wondered for a moment what would happen if she were to answer: "Ich bin schön, mir ist schlecht—in Berlin," whether the Fräulein would fly into the air or out of the door. But the anticipation alone of what she would have to rouse herself to meet before the occurrence of such a happy eventuality fatigued her. And it was so much easier to get rid of her immediately.

"I can't tell you, I fear. It is a secret. But even if I do not go, I shall be working at my Arbeit, so it will have to be our last lesson; and the weather is so bad, perhaps you had better be going at once. It's ten minutes to the hour, anyway."

Frl. Bayer, who had since her curiosity remained unsatisfied

Love Days

begun to realize her deep disappointment, bridled. "Please! I wish to give my whole lesson. I shall even make up for the five minutes I lost at the beginning,—in spite of your giving me up."

"Thank you, but I prefer not to continue, I feel tired."

"Ach, the quarter of an hour will be quickly passed. Let us continue here."

Susanna, roused from her agreeably lethargic state, felt her nerves actually jump;—soon, she thought they would snap.

"Frl. Bayer," she almost shouted, "*mir ist schlecht!*" She had darted forward; she was itching to eject Frl. Bayer bodily; her expression showed it.

"Ach sooo! Therefore, then, your peculiar behaviour!" and Frl. Bayer, all mystery removed, smiled pleasantly once more, and offered help.

Susanna, however, had jumped up, and rung for Bridget. "The maid will help you out. Excuse me if I go suddenly!" And with this she rushed into her bedroom, taking the precaution of locking the door, which Frl. Bayer at once sure-enough-shook in a final attempt to do her duty and manage Susanna's sickness.

Susanna threw herself on her bed, and lay on it, quivering, until she heard Frl. Bayer's exit after some vain attempts to stir up Bridget, who failed to "get" both her English and her German.—She had thrown herself on the bed rather than on the sofa, because of the latter's unhygienically aged red plush body. If I stay here much longer, and throw myself about, she thought, I'll have to have the furniture re-upholstered.

But she was restless, and she rose again almost at once, and, unable to remain stationary, wandered around the room, and finally approached the window to see what had happened about the weather, for night seemed suddenly to be falling.

On the way there she remembered the existence of the racial expression; and again thwarted, and again filled with depression, she again stood still and looked about for something else to do. Her mirror faced her, and she sat down before it, and dropping her face in her hands—today's typical gesture—, and gazing up into her eyes, she tried once more to concentrate on a plan of action. But what came to her instead of plans of actions, compelling her attention, was a case of lunacy, of which she had read

Susanna Moore's

in some psychology; the case of a man who had discovered late in life that he could not look into anyone's two eyes, but only into one of them at a time, and who had nevertheless spent the rest of his life trying to do so. Susanna tried it for a while, too, and after that gave herself up to a scrutiny of her two eyes to discover whether either were superior to the other, with a view to directing people's gaze to it, since after all they had to make a selection. She then decided that it might kill time to try a new headdress, and, accordingly, she put on a dressing-sack, and as a preliminary step, let down her hair. It rippled over her shoulders, and flowed down to her waist and below,—after starting its life in heavy thick waves on her broad white forehead.

She held her brush poised. "Ich bin schön; mir ist schlecht," came into her head again, and at once the heavy accumulated cloud of her malaise again enveloped her. . . . She dropped her arm, and the brush, and let her hair hang, and sat still and suffered. Yes, she thought, Auntie won't mind, and we'll leave. We'll go somewhere else. Somewhere else—somehow she could not get farther than this in her thoughts; Paris flashed through them, and Oxford, and Cambridge,—but only as names—: nothing definite went with them, so to say. It was as though she herself were ready to break away from Berlin, but not so her thoughts.

She wandered back to the salon again, like a lost soul, and sat down at her desk again. She opened a drawer absent-mindedly. Uppermost was a batch of letters, not-yet-answered letters. She fingered them—: Blanche's, Virginia's, Tom's . . . Tom . . . Susanna flushed—; here was something to do—; at last she had hit on something, something real.

She pulled vigorously at another drawer, got out her writing things, and gathering herself together and in from all sides, as it were, she forthwith began in a rush:

"Dear old Tom:

I've been in the blues all day and I wish I'd thought of you before this,—four thirty. I've been annoyed ever since I got up this morning—I mean ever since I got here last month—by one thing after another without end, until I am now ready to weep on someone's shoulder—preferably yours. And I don't even know why—I seem to have lost the power of searching thought, or at least the power of finding anything;—but gathering up lazy and hazy mental

Love Days

impressions and rolling them into a ball, I find its centre, and the nucleus of all my discomfort to be: 'Ich bin schön: mir ist schlecht in Berlin.' I wish I might have had this trouble in New York, but in Berlin it's no fun. Here everyone talks to me, questions me, instructs me; ladies prod and pinch me if it is helpful to their craving for knowledge. Indeed, everything that comes to me here, comes enveloped in some frightfully redolent atmosphere, physical or spiritual, to which one must accustom one's self before one can get at the thing itself.

My lectures at the University for instance,—perfect things—just the things I want—they're imbedded in the highly flavoured conditions attached to reaching them,—the horrible walk, and the classroom full of horrible students, horrible, because they won't let you ignore them nor accept them impersonally. And the theatre here, far more interesting than any I have ever known, it, too, is surrounded with the thick and sticky atmosphere of an audience one has to take account of in detail. Even in the shops one is forced to go through the performance of becoming acquainted with the shop-keeper and his opinion of his ware and other ware and sometimes of oneself, before one is through,—so that I don't go into any shops anymore.

And the people themselves are almost invisible in their swathings of professional titles and class etiquette and conventional formality and more profound conventional mental form. One freely encounters their curiosity but not their personality, not the naked soul behind all this uniformity of covering.

Oh, I don't know how to put it,—but nothing seems to exist here raw, or even merely cooked, for you to consume in peace if you want to,—everything seems pre-masticated, and all you are expected to do is to swallow it and grow fat.— This is only approximately what I mean; it is not clear to me just what is the process and the trouble when I get the impression that things are pounced on and arranged and put in a setting the moment they appear,— in a really thick setting that removes them from the possibility of your direct personal reaction.

But what I'm sure of is that there exists a local mania to take possession of everything and everybody—: there is a fearful physical and mental greed in the air. I am almost afraid of getting eaten up unless I eat up everything in sight first. Or no, I'm not really afraid, because after being nibbled at, I am always discarded. But one can get nibbled at to the point of raggedness. And today my nerves certainly are completely exposed through the nibbling process, and as I can't put my head on your shoulder and scream, I am following Aristotle's prescription in this partial manner.

Susanna Moore's

I feel a little relieved already.

Tom dear, what are you all doing that's nice? Are you missing me as much as I should like you to? What will you now feel when you picture me truthfully, as I am, quite forlorn in a red plush room with scratched-up furniture, and a damp, dreary day dying outside the starched white curtains that prick my fingers when I touch them? And where we live twenty-four hours a day because it's quiet and conveniently located. And where I have no one to complain to but myself. . . .

What an opportunity for you to have missed, my dear Tom, constructed as you are for help and consolation! Wonderful compound of essential young man and old woman;—wise and sympathetic, and patient, and aggressive and selfish—: Think of what might happen if you were on the spot where, alone, I wilt and droop and suffer without knowing why!

I'm going to leave here next week, though I don't know where we shall go. Various university towns float through my mind, beckoning; but very unsubstantial for all that. Even home crops up—now, at this moment, more definitely than before. This is flattery, for home is represented by nothing but the electric light I have just lighted, and by you, marvellous American male, who does not look for female acquaintance on the streets and in public places, and who never, to my knowledge at least, walked below my windows, preventing me from looking at the weather. Wonderful friend and companion, how it would amuse you here since you are not a girl like myself 'zu schön', much 'zu schön' for my 'Verhältnisse.'— I suddenly see myself symbolically as one climbing a mountain for the view, and only allowed to enjoy it from the terrace of a restaurant where a ten-course lunch including pork and sauerkraut must be consumed along with it. Or as a spectator in a strange city full of mystery, happily engaged in feeling its charm, when from all sides hordes of living Baedekers throw themselves upon me, and explain and estimate everything, and tell me what to feel about everything—and I never can feel anything at all because I have no privacy. . . I am clay in the hands of Berlin. I am pulp saturated with pain. I must go away—.

Thank you, dear old Tom, for your kind attention; thank you for all the consoling thoughts you so unfortunately have to suppress; thank you for the benevolent satire I can so easily imagine; and thank you for your so welcome letters, and your kindness to me, and—in a word—thank you for your friendship. I'm very fond of you.

Yours sincerely
SUSANNA."

Love Days

Susanna folded the letter and gurgled. She gurgled when she laughed at herself and felt apologetic for finding herself amusing.

She then lay back.— And already, through the layers of pleasant feeling that the act of writing had generated, the dreariness was soaking up from the profundities. Gone limp again, Susanna wearily shook her hair from her brow and made ready to address her letter, no longer consoling, when Bridget burst into the room excitedly.

"Miss Susan, Miss Susan, who do you think is downstairs, waiting to come up, but Mr. Harvey!"

Susanna was paralyzed. "Mr. Harvey—what Mr. Harvey?"

"Sure Mr. Tom, Miss Susan, Mr. Tom! He may be on his way up this very minute. Your hair is all undone!"

Snatching her letter Susanna raced into her room. Her face was flooded with blushes and her features were strained with suppressed disturbance as she did up her hair before the mirror, and powdered her face, and wet her eyebrows and lashes. Her limpness was gone as though it had never been, and so was her playfulness. All of a sudden she found herself in a fighting mood. No matter what he has come for, nothing will be changed, was her deep resolve. Before this was understood and accepted by him, nothing at all would be permitted to happen. After that the floodgates of her pleasure in him would beautifully open. . . .

She hurried as much as she could; she wanted to get into the fray and have her first point settled. But she had her boots on still, and she could not receive him in boots; neither could she behave as though he weren't there in the next room where she heard him enter,—strange incredible unreal fact. . . .

Approaching the door she called in: "Tom, are you really there?"

"Susanna, I am," he called back in his thick harsh and familiar voice. "Come in, Susan!"

"In a minute; I'm Americanizing my feet!" she laughed. Tom's good old common-sense reassuring voice. . . . How nice to have him here. . . . How new and different it made everything. . . .

She opened the door, and almost fell into Tom's arms, so close was he to it. He put his hands on her shoulders, smiling at her uncertainly. She removed them gently, her brow wrinkled, her

Susanna Moore's

cheeks reddened, her mouth screwed up pertly. Holding his hands prisoner, she lifted her chin and turned her starry eyes on his.

"You seem awfully pleased to see me; please don't seem so awfully pleased,—because I'm pleased to see you too, and you make my pleasure seem shabby alongside of yours!" She burst out laughing at her words, and his face, which had been immobile with a tender smile and serious questioning eyes, relaxed.

Giving her two hands a squeeze with his two, he laughed: "All right, stingy Susan, I'll stop being pleased at the point I'm at now. Of course it makes you look shabby, stingy Susan! How is the child? Sit down here and tell me why you aren't as glad to see me as you ought to be. Are you having a good time? Are you being amused?"

Tom was tall, Tom was large, Tom was strong. He was heavy featured, regular featured; his mouth was full and well-shaped, his nose was straight, his eyes were small and brown, kindly and quizzical. There was little to be said about his hair or his throat or his neck;—there was, in fact, little to be said about any part of his person, because it was such that it invited no comment.

Nevertheless Susanna had her impressions of it,—strong ones. The chief of these was that the only interesting thing about Tom's appearance was the fact that he did not look at all like he was,—that this physical shell was indeed a shell, a deadish thing. Indeed whole parts of him seemed to her shell-like, mask-like, uninformed by spirit; of a materiality and opaqueness at times absolutely disconcerting,—the times being Tom's moments of feminine insight and sympathy, which she simply adored. Indeed, but for his eyes, his clever, kindly, tolerant eyes, Susanna would have regarded this upstanding, handsome male as physically monstrous.

She sat down as directed, next to him on the red plush sofa. She exhibited a slightly bridling air, as if ready though not anxious to jump, and, after withdrawing the hand he tried to get possession of, she drawled: "Look around you, perspicacious Tom, and judge whether I am being amused. Don't you see that I'm living in a new atmosphere, and in a new world,—in a sort of funny 'set' in which I feel like a heroine of some kind—"

"What kind?" he interrupted.

"I don't know yet. I've been here only a month, four little

Love Days

weeks. But I can tell you this much, anyway: a beautiful Titianesque one. I'm excessively beautiful here in Berlin, every inhabitant thinks so."

"Well, I'm an inhabitant of Berlin now," Tom grabbed Susanna's hand, "stingy Susan," he murmured, squeezing it. "How do you know they think so? Do they tell you so, all of them?"

"Most of them; all who walk in this neighbourhood do. The others write it to me. Yes, I'm a great spectacular success here; it's very funny and amusing."

Susanna looked into Tom's eyes, and then at her hand held in his. She wrinkled her brow, and pursed her lips and looked bored, and having treated him to this pantomime, glanced back at her hand and at him, who, apparently unruffled, continued to hold it.

"Susanna, my child, are you happy here?" he asked.

"But, dear Tom," Susanna replied in her soft and languid way, "I didn't come here to be happy. I came here to do some work agreeably, and I'm very much interested . . . and amused. Yes, I suppose this is being happy; I'd be happier if you'd let my hand go."

"Stingy Susan," Tom put his other hand over hers. "I've come all the way from New York to Berlin because I wanted to see you, and you try to elude me just as though I'd dropped into your drawingroom from around the corner. But I'm not going to be put off like this. I'm going to—"

"Well, you aren't." Susanna's instincts and intelligence flew together and co-operated. "You are not, pugnacious Tom, because if you do, you'll spoil everything, for me and for you. . . . Because I'm feeling a little gladder to see you all the time, but if you make me measure things now, you'll stop their growth altogether. Look here, Tom, you're making a mistake: I *am* like a heroine in a strange play; I feel very romantic and unique and full of ego, and you're trying to drag me back to the commonplace. Look here, I'm going to show you what you are competing with— After you've been shown, have your say; but be your own old self until then!— Let's just have a good time, because, you see, I'm awfully glad to have you here with me, so awfully glad."

She touched him with her eyes only, but the contact of her beseeching gaze was intimate and persuasive, it would seem, for

Susanna Moore's

Tom replied gently: "All right, stingy Susan, have it your own way."

"And stop calling me stingy, please."

"All right, no longer stingy Susan, have it your own way; when and where does the show begin?"

Susanna rose, and pulled the bell-rope. "Right away; we shall have tea here, and you must see our complete outfit in red plush, and during tea you must tell me the news from home, and after that I'll smuggle you into my Schnackenberg lecture." Susanna was sparkling with pleasure.

"Heavens,—a lecture," said Tom, "on what?"

"The subject is unimportant; *he* is the attraction. And the 'décor' is amusing."

"What time will it be over?" he asked.

"At eight."

"Then we'll dine somewhere at eight," he said, "in some decent place, will we?"

"We shall see," Susanna said teasingly, but her eyes shone, and she was excited. Think of my getting all het up over dining with old Tom, she commented privately. Oh, Berlin what are you doing to me. . . .

And she was happy. She pointed out all the horrors of their rooms to him with great gusto; she took the tea from the dejected waiter with a smile so brilliant that he announced to the house-slave and others less interested that the American Miss had her "Verlobter" upstairs; and during tea she received the news of her friends from home, and of conditions at home, with warm interest. And when finally she got ready for their outing, changing to a black velvet afternoon gown, a concession to the lecture-hall, she hummed and smiled, and smiled and hummed.

As she stood before him, a slim white and copper and black creature, shining and vibrating with a light all her own, and without a single discernible suggestion of the utilitarian aspect of nature anywhere about her, Tom commented: "This is the first exhibit that has impressed me, my dear," but he took pains not to specify in what manner he was impressed.

They rode the short distance to the University in a taxi. Susanna was garrulous: "How much nicer it is to have you beside me than Bridget, who takes me to parties, unless one of the hall boys does. Yes, I have them ride in front with the chauffeur.

Love Days

Bridget is so helpless and has such a time making herself understood.

"So am I, and so do I," Tom put in.

"You are, but you don't," Susanna laughed; "and anyway the difference between you is that Bridget doesn't know German, and you don't know me."

"It's not necessary to know you, if you and I know a third language—"

"Oh Tom," she interposed, "please—and anyway you promised—"

"Well, come on with some exhibit then, as you promised, my dear."

"We're on our way," she pacified him.

They entered the badly lighted, stuffy and still crowded corridors of the University.

"Look at them looking at me," she whispered to him, while she herself looked straight ahead.

"Not even for that will I look at them," he replied. "Why shouldn't they look at you; you're the only thing worth looking at I've seen so far except the cake-store near my hotel."

They found seats together in the back of the large lecture hall. It was brightly enough lighted, yet the dusty and thick air formed an enveloping atmosphere that connected the separate parts into a whole. It reminded Susanna of a Daumier picture, of its colour, light, and to some extent of its grotesqueness.

Susanna took off her outer things and placed them on her lap. Tom did likewise, and Susanna found that he did it with the same air and jerks with which he reacted to the inevitability of a Broadway show at which he expected to be bored. She felt a little annoyed.

"Isn't it a little thrilling to see men from all parts of Europe and America and Asia assembled in this spirit of intellectual brotherhood?" she whispered. "Aren't they wonderfully intense and eager! Don't you get the feeling wonderfully that they're here because they want to be, because they want—ardently—to learn—?"

"Yes," he whispered back, "I do, my child. I got the feeling instantaneously, I don't have to stay here three months to make sure, just as I don't need to come back again to know that this is

Susanna Moore's

the closest, worst aired room I've ever been in, I know it now.— Here comes your super-teacher."

After the stamping that greeted his entrance had subsided, the great and only von Schnackenberg-Konitz cleared his throat, sat down, and began.

"This evening, gentlemen and ladies, I shall speak to you of the poetess Sappho.— Sappho, then, gentlemen and ladies, known to antiquity as the tenth Muse, was . . . etc. etc."

Susanna for a time sat absorbed, though only partially absorbed. She was pleasantly and comfortably aware of Tom's proximity—now that circumstances so successfully tamed and controlled him. She wondered vaguely how much German he knew; she occasionally wondered whether he was asleep, or, worse, planning things about her; and once she became sufficiently restless to steal a glance at him out of the corner of her eyes. It discovered him listening attentively, head cocked to one side and eyes covered with glasses which he had put on for the evident purpose of missing nothing. "He's thorough," she reflected, but the reflection brought her no comfort,—quite the contrary.

She herself lost little of what was said and revealed, and even though under the circumstances she could not bend her critical mind to its consideration, she heard it all sufficiently well to store it up for recollection. The content of the lecture was strange enough too, as it happened. Sappho was being treated not only in her character of poet, but as famous or infamous woman as well. She was being judged once more: was being exonerated, purified. Konitz was tonight not so much the scholar as the moralist; every moment he became more concrete as he gave expression to his opinion of Sappho's morals of twenty-five hundred years ago, and his opinion of her reputed morals, and his opinion of what morals should be.

Susanna, during a citation of some verses with which she was intimately acquainted, let her thoughts wander away. How interesting it would be really to get at people's ethical views, their real views, the ones they saw by and used; not their ideals;—Konitz's or even Tom's.—Especially Tom's,—the modern man's. Here was Tom claiming to love her, whatever he might mean by that, and yet what did she know of his views on marriage, love, sex—? Nothing. She knew what men and women held

Love Days

as ideals in these matters, and she thought to know that, although they believed their far-off visions to be identical, they were no more so than two parallel lines that converge in the distance. . . . And she knew something of men's actual frailties and constant lapses from their professed ideals, and that in practice men and women no longer pretended to identical standards of behaviour. . . . But what these standards were, these real standards which they applied to individual cases,—to themselves, for instance,—she did not know. . . .

Yet, did it matter so much, she asked herself. . . . Did it matter so much what they thought, compared to what they were? And what they were, did one not get it in some indescribable manner through oneself,—through one's own response to them? Yes, while one was oneself, sure of oneself, one with oneself, one knew others in some profound and important way. . . .

"Hasn't he a marvellous head, and doesn't he chant Greek verse beautifully?" she whispered, while the chanter was hunting for another poem.

"As an æsthetic spectacle he'll pass," Tom whispered back.

The lecture had come to an end. Hundreds of auditors streamed and trickled out noisily. Tom and Susanna escaped among the first.

Tom inquired of Susanna where she would like to dine. Susanna suggested that it was too early to dine after they had so lately tead, and that they should hear the end of some concert—there were fine concerts every night—, and then take supper at some gay place. "This is my first spree, you know, my first real spree," she ended.

"Couldn't we cut out the concert and walk about Berlin?" he objected.

Susanna agreed; she had never walked in Berlin at night;—she waxed quite enthusiastic. It had stopped drizzling,—they might begin by walking up the Friedrichstrasse, and "flâner" along it; that, she had heard, was the thing to do. And look in at the cafés and movies.

"All right," he agreed, "it's better than another lecture, even a musical one. We'll pretend it's Broadway."

"Why call a concert a musical lecture,—is that all you get out of it?"

Susanna Moore's

"Well," he replied, "I thought it was that which it shared with a lecture—enforced silence—that made you recommend it."

Susanna laughed. "What did you think of the lecture? Did you understand enough of it to enjoy it?"

"Well," he replied leisurely, tucking her arm under his, "I understood enough of it henceforth to think of Sappho as a respectable and reliable schoolmarm to whom all of wealthy Greece sent their daughters for a respectable and reliable polish to their education. Occasionally Frau Sappho, while at four o'clock she sat drinking coffee on her balcony on the blue Mediterranean and eating coffee-'kuchen,' would call for one of the smaller girls to bring her her tablets and style, and when she was properly surrounded by all the rest of the pupils looking over her shoulders, would remark: 'Also, so, Kinder, must poetry of the passionate class, for instance, be written' and inscribe one of her fragments on a tablet, while disposing of the remaining fragments of the coffee-kuchen in the regular way."

Susanna, who was extremely amused, and rather of his opinion, though vaguely so, remained silent.

Tom gave her arm a squeeze. "You funny child, to come all this way to find out what Sappho was from an old German gentleman," he remarked, bending his head to hers.

She was now annoyed. If Tom only knew how objectionable were his teasing ways! "Would you have told me all about Sappho, if I had asked you, and saved me the trip? Well, give me your interpretation now of the Lesbian." She thought this rather a poser, a deserved poser.

"My dear child," the unruffable Tom replied, "the point I tried to make was that you yourself, being so much nearer to Sappho in sex and in age ought to be able to get at her probable psyche better than the old Junker we listened to respectfully. But as long as you ask me for a judgment, I'll give it to you with the modifying clause that my actual acquaintance with the Lesbian ceased ten years ago at college."

"You're not addressing court; you don't need to be so circum-spect; guess away."

"Sappho, naïve Susan," he continued, "was—"

"I like 'naïve'!" she broke in with an indignant laugh.

"I like Susan. Sappho was an artist, and besides that she was passionate, in the sense of erotic, my child; and her impulses

Love Days

probably found no adequate normal expression, so they turned upon what beauty was at hand, and became what we call perverted, and what in those days was more or less the order of the day, nevertheless. Whether or not she gratified them in a physical sense interests the ethical historian;—that she had them and made art of them is the point. I differ with the learned Junker in thinking that no amount of schoolmarming or general humanitarian feelings, or any amount of coffee and cake or its Greek equivalent, could have released the creative urge or whatever it is that makes for art."

Susanna felt somewhat uncomfortable during this miniature lecture, not because of any theoretical revelations it contained, or threatened to contain, but because lecturers on these subjects, she felt, should be on platforms,—certainly should be farther removed than he was, linked arm in arm with her. Yet it was her intellectual duty, since she had opened this discussion, not to slink out of it, as her instinct urged (unlike Sappho's, she told herself).

"In other words, because she made great poetry of perverse love, she must have been perverse?" she asked.

"Felt perverse, anyway."

"And," Susanna continued to educate herself, "why was she perverse; because she had no adequate normal love affair, did you say?"

Tom burst out laughing. "You seem to regard me as an authority, you funny Susan, or are you trying to find out something else? I wasn't there, you know; I mentioned this as a probable cause of perversity: often men and women are driven to perverse practices because the normal satisfactions obtainable are of an unbeautiful nature, more unbeautiful than the perverse ones seem to them at any rate to be. This is the most favourable interpretation of perversity, reserved for artists and people who seem to have some pretensions to a sense of—of fastidiousness." Tom paused; he had seen Susanna's face frowning like a perplexed child's trying to understand. His strident voice grew softer. "All in all, my dear, it's not an attractive subject, and it's hard for healthy people to grasp, so don't be alarmed if you don't 'get' it; neither does the Professor. Susan, child, where are we going?"

Susanna, decidedly relieved that this opportunity for getting information on this so important and baffling and unpleasant subject

Susanna Moore's

had passed, breathed freely again and gave herself up to the impressions of the moment. They had now emerged from the rather empty and darkish Linden into the brightly lighted Friedrich-strasse, where a dense crowd was surging by, jostling them. Pools of light from street-lamps and signs shone on the wet asphalt, and illumined the passing cars, wagons and bicyclists, and the umbrella-holding damp crowd. There was a great deal of tooting.

"Damned tough looking crowd for Germans," remarked Tom.

"Not so tough as vulgar, I think."

"Fifty fifty."

They presently entered a cinema, for fun, and left it almost immediately, for air, and strolled on.

Tom next suggested a popular café-restaurant they were about to pass, for cocktails and hors-d'oeuvres, as a prelude to dinner in some more private place. Susanna acquiesced.

They descended into its brilliant and noisy depths, and wound their way to one of the few empty tables. It was very light and hot; around them sat large and stout people with great masses of food and mugs of beer in front of them, making a great clatter with steel knives and forks and voices. Every one seemed busy, but not too busy to stare at every one else, and particularly at newcomers. Waiters were skilfully rushing past with heavily laden trays, shouting, "Komme, komme," and "Im Moment." One flying past called this to Tom and Susanna.

"Do you like it here?" Tom shouted at Susanna, to make himself heard.

"Like it!" she shouted back. "It's so dreadful it doesn't seem real."

"Let's go, then!"

They wound their way out, accompanied by stares of curiosity from the tables passed. At the door they were stopped by the head-waiter with inquiries.

"It's too hot down here," Tom informed him.

The head-waiter barred the exit. He would arrange for that: a window might perhaps be opened, no need to leave for that. Would "the Herrschaften" please return to their seats.

"No," said Tom, preparing to remove the head-waiter's obstructing form.

Susanna intervened quickly. "Mir ist schlecht," she murmured to the waiter with a strange and confidential air.

Love Days

They were allowed to leave.

Out in the damp but fresh night air Susanna explained her "Mir-ist-schlecht" discovery to Tom. "I don't know what I should do without it, it makes everything easy and pleasant. It's the open sesame to exit doors. It's what oil is to a motor. It's what the ring is to a love affair. . . ."

They were again walking up the Linden; they had decided to dine at the Bristol. "What do you know about love affairs?" Tom was weak enough to ask.

"Nothing," she replied, rushing into the opening. "That's why I can talk so much about love. I still have a large, impersonal, intuitive sort of intimacy with it." She laughed her amused, apologetic gurgle. "At least I'm as intimate as I wish to be." She thought this rather a neat and conclusive hint.

"And how intimate is that?" asked Tom. "The intimacy of a busy person with an undesirable relative? This brings in your intuitive acquaintance—"

"The intimacy of a mother with an unborn child." And Susanna liked this image so much that she was radiant in the light of the lamp they passed; and she looked to Tom for appreciation, naively, as she continued, "This is one of my intuitions about love. Complete acquaintance will come when the rest of the ancestry of the unborn is known."

She laughed again. It was sweet to be able to talk so freely to Tom; it would be even more wonderful if he were a girl,—they could then express themselves quite freely—since he wouldn't be in love with her—and so help one another to self-expression.

She fell to wondering what kind of a woman Tom would have been. . . . Perhaps a powerful, efficient, didactic, bornée creature. . . . Perhaps. . . .

Tom, too, was silent; deliberately silent for the first time since they were together.

"Of what are you thinking, Tom?" she asked after a while, carelessly.

"Of you," he replied.

"Still!" she ejaculated. This was sincere but foolish, as she immediately realized. "Well," she added, "that's quite natural; I'm the nearest object at hand." It cost her quite an effort to

Susanna Moore's

mention this fact, because she herself enjoyed it so little that she wished to ignore it.

"Yes, it's natural," he said, and his robust voice sounded tired.

They had now reached the Bristol. They entered, traversed the lobby in silence, and in the large and empty dining-room chose a remote table. It was only a little past nine, and the after-theatre crowd was not yet due. The spacious room was pleasantly quiet. They were in comparative seclusion.

"It's nice here, isn't it?" she remarked absently after they had ordered.

"Yes, quite civilized; and it's empty," he bent towards her and spoke quite loud in his strident voice, but avoided looking into her eyes; "and here is where my innings come in. There's no lecture going on, and no street noises, and it's the depths of night in Berlin, and you can't get away from me. No Arabian Sultan ever had his Suleika more completely in his power. . . . I think I shall call you Suleika for the present."

Suleika flushed. She felt that there was nothing in this situation she could not cope with, if only she had a chance to marshal her forces. But it was so on top of her, around her, enveloping her; it was so awfully present. And his attitude towards her was so incredible. . . . Since he understood her so well in most ways, and they were such great companions, it was inexplicable that he should react emotionally to her as though she were a person entirely different from herself. . . .

She looked at him, puzzled. His quizzical and otherwise so inexpressive face was a little strained, his voice less assured as for a while he continued in his bantering style. She sighed; it was all so difficult,—and might be so easy. And, in a flash of illumination—as she thought—she decided that the thing to do was to let him say everything, and have it over with;—and she thought of what stood before her in terms of a surgical operation, without anæsthesia, followed by sudden recovery. Her spirits took comfort and rose.

Tom was remarking on the difficulties of choosing a sultanic method of dealing with a favourite slave in a public restaurant. She interrupted. "Very well, then, Tom, my dear, stop beating about the bush, and say it."

"Say what?" he asked.

Love Days

"What you have come to Berlin to say."

He frowned. "You make it difficult enough, Susanna. You see to it that I derive no encouragement from any mood of yours, and you place me in surroundings that would silence the song in the heart of a phonograph. . . . And when the supper arrives to further distract your attention, then you want me to make love to you prettily."

"Want you to!—" Susanna gasped naïvely and spontaneously. "Tom, what do you mean?— You know very well that I thought it inevitable,—that's why I suggested that you exhaust the subject now, since it hangs over us like a sword, smothers us like a shroud,"—Susanna stopped eating; she thought herself mistress of the situation for a moment, hence felt free and had ideas—, "penetrates us like poisoned gas, keeps us pinioned to earth like some slushy swamp—" she laughed again at her haphazard fluency. "Oh, Tom, dear old Tom, why do you have to bother me with just this!" She leaned across the table. "Wasn't my leaving you last spring sign enough? See, you and I are such perfect friends, we have such a really good time together, why can't you leave it at that?"

"Because I love you.— Susanna," he continued, as she fell back like a disappointed child—he was almost certain he heard a suppressed "ts" from her lips—"I don't understand you. When I'm with you I think I do because I'm in love with you and consequently everything you say and do seems more or less desirable, even the many things that hurt me. But when I consider you from a distance in my sane moments, you puzzle me. Most of the time you act like a precocious child; and yet you've had the experience of men falling in love with you for half a dozen years. Can't you understand what love is, or haven't you any sympathy for it, or what is it that keeps you a child?"

"Very well, Tom!" Susanna was mildly furious without knowing why. "But before I answer you, would you mind telling me why it is, if I'm a child, that you are in love with a child?"

Tom was concentrating on his glass of champagne which his fingers were turning nervously on its stem; he made no reply.

"Would you mind telling me," she continued in a kind of excited, breathless drawl, her starry blunt eyes looking at him and through him, "why you, a perfectly self-conscious, deliberate and I suppose what's called a red-blooded man, though I don't know I'm

Susanna Moore's

sure,—what makes you choose me, a stingy, naïve, unawakened child, for your mate,—I suppose that is what you are proposing. What does it all mean anyway, this falling in love with me, with what I seem to you all to be! Why does it happen then?"

Tom stared at her, his face gone a little pale, his voice thick. "Spare me the answer," he said, wearily.

"Why?—why should I?" she demanded, airily. "You asked me a very intimate question; what is my relation to love, and you implied that there was a stunted growth on my part. You are not the first, not by any means. But I care what you think, because I admire you, and I'll try to answer you. So why should you not answer me? I want to know why, if you see me in this way, you deliberately choose me?"

"I didn't choose you, Susanna," he replied, slowly, some of his fluent assurance having deserted him; "my flesh and blood and spirit and soul, all of them together have spoken for you so insistently that, to be honest, my mind is coerced. Whether you're a child,—and you're not all child,—but whether or not doesn't make any difference to my love for you. I take joy in you as you are, in everything you are, and I want you just as you are, and it's only because I can't have you that I ask you to tell me about yourself to see what my chances of having you some day may be."

He looked up again and smiled a little. "In other words, Susan, I'm heckling you, because you don't love me and I want to find out why, though I know I'm a fool for my pains—: there is no why, neither for love nor indifference."

There was a silence; Susanna was touched.

"Tom dear," she began tenderly in a vibrant voice, though she looked less a woman than ever. Her sweet mouth puckered into a full round bud-like thing in the effort of concentration, her starry eyes in their eagerness looked blinder than ever, her head was tilted upward and sideways, the column of her throat thickened. She forgot that she was at table, she forgot that she was in any special place; she folded her hands on her lap. "You are a dear; and because you are so dear to me I'm going to try to answer you. You see, you're probably right—I am a child in this matter of sex and love, if it's being a child not to be able to concentrate on it. Because I don't,—not deliberately. Only when it's thrust on me, as it so often is because I'm a girl. It

Love Days

seems to me, too, that it's unnatural that I should be bothered unwillingly, should have this emphasis in my life just because I happen to be a girl. I resent it, I think, though I don't resent it so much in feeling as in action. I keep it off, hold it off, without much effort. But this isn't what I want to say . . . I've got off the track. . . . I want to say that I don't think about love when I don't have to because—I don't want to, really. I don't want to. I have certain intuitions and ideals about the beauty and power of love. It is somewhat like an elusive melody to me, one that sounds internally in the spirit, but to which one can't give definite form. And I feel that surely I must have the right to follow my instinct in wanting to feel love before I know all about it theoretically or even imaginatively, and certainly practically. To feel it virgin, as it were; intensely; like a revelation." Susanna blushed. "That's why my tastes and instincts agree in keeping me innocent, or ignorant, or more truly, I think, indifferent. I don't really care; happily I care for so many other things, for beauty above all, and for life in general and my own foolish reactions to it." Susanna blushed again as she continued, "I take a certain pleasure in myself just because I'm childish and immature and still growing. I don't know how it is, but I'm something of a mother and child in one; I, as child, sometimes do and say and guess things that astonish and dazzle me as mother. . . . Do you see, all this makes me stupid about many things. But about you, Tom, I really think I understand how you think of me." Susanna blushed again, but less. "I understand that you really love me, take pleasure in me, and hold me dear. I ought perhaps to be unhappy about it, but I can't, because all that is beautiful is happiness to me, and your feeling is so beautiful and belongs a little to me."

As she brought this discourse to a close, Susanna went a shade pale from the effort it had cost her to go through with this public articulation; she dropped her head, and bit her lips and frowned to keep back the tears that floated in her eyes; her breath came and went heavily. It was this spectacle to which Tom was treated.

"Thanks, Susan, dearest, sweetest," he said and his voice was thick. "Let's pay and get out of this.— Waiter!" he shouted in tones that made everyone within earshot, happily including the waiter, take notice.

Susanna Moore's

They stood on the street. Tom said: "Shall we take a taxi?"

"It's only a block up, our hotel."

"I can't say good-bye to you on the street; and I suppose I can't come up as long as you are alone."

"Good-bye?"

"I'm leaving tomorrow."

There was a pause.

"Oh," Susanna murmured, hurt; and then more vigorously, "oh, Tom!"

"Let's take a taxi, Susan, there's a good girl; it's going to be good-bye," he said with elaborate cheeriness.

"Certainly," Susanna replied obediently, "just as you say."

"Shall I tell him to drive in the park for ten minutes?"

"Certainly," she replied, "if you want to."

They got into the car. Susanna felt exhausted, as though her strength had gone into a defeat instead of a victory. Although she could not have said just what would have constituted a victory, the knowledge that in a few moments he would be gone, and she would be left to her struggle with the ugliness and loneliness that surrounded her, did not taste like victory. And in this thick silence she had the unhappy feeling that Tom's heartbeats ought to be audible, and that she was to blame for not hearing them. This silence was dreadful, but she dreaded even more its termination.

"Susan," finally came from Tom, "are Greek lectures enough to keep you content here; don't you get sick of all this, these people, and the way they fuss over you?"

Susanna's relief first stunned and then released her. How he understood and saw through things. . . .

"Of course I do every now and then. Today for instance,—before you came. But then there's the novelty, and the picturesqueness of it, and the freedom from—from everything,—even habit. I'll miss you dreadfully, just the same; seeing you again was seeing home again—the home of my spirit, you know, Tom, dear."

She touched him voluntarily, as a little offering; she laid her hand over his which was engaged in clasping her umbrella handle.

He took her hand tenderly in his. "You said you weren't sorry I love you. I want you to know that I'm not sorry either, though it's a frustrated and painful love, and I long for you and

Love Days

ache for you all the time.—You see, Susan dear, it isn't every man's fortune to fall in love with a girl he also loves—cherishes, admires, adores. The spirit and the flesh don't always agree. . . . So I thank my fate for having given me the whole of the feeling through you, and I want you to know that just loving you as I do is a beautiful experience, darling Susan, God bless you! Now make up something nice in your best style to say to me, because here we are and it's good-bye. . . .”

Susanna rose to the occasion.

“You wonderful Tom,” she said, holding up her face to him. “I'll cry in a minute, unless you kiss me good-bye and tell me you're still my dearest friend.”

Tom put his arm about her, bent back her head on his shoulder, and kissed her on the cheek, close to the mouth. He kissed her hard and long, with the ecstasy of possession of a first kiss, and the despair of a last kiss.

When he finally released her, she jumped from the car. “Don't bother to get out,” she murmured, “Good-bye, good-bye. . . .”

She had no last impression of him other than the impress of his mouth on her skin, sinking into her face, because she did not wait for one. She rushed into the hotel, rushed upstairs, and into her room. Here she threw herself into a chair.

She sat in this chair as one paralyzed, body and brain. She could not think a single thought; all that took place in her was raw misty feeling.

Some time passed.— The rawness grew less, the mists lifted. Gradually one thought emerged and stood out. Comfortingly. In all this unfortunate confusing complication one thing was comfortably certain—: He did not know. . . . She had spared him the knowledge—through self-control and at a cost of a great sacrifice—, the knowledge that he was physically distasteful to her. His manner of kissing her proved it, proved that he did not divine it. . . . What a comfort, what a comfort! . . .

Susanna looked over in the direction of the wash-basin with increasing frequency. She was torn between a desire, almost nauseatingly intense, to put water on her face and erase the kiss and with it its physical memory-image, and a feeling of compunction for the implied disloyalty.—She presently compromised. She would, she decided, wash her face quite as usual, before going to

Susanna Moore's

bed, and after brushing her hair and her teeth and the rest; but she would go to bed now. It was early, but not so very early. And even if it was! . . .

Susanna undressed with great speed without calling Bridget, brushed her hair lightly, hurried through her other preparations, and then scrubbed her face thoroughly with scented soap, and powdered it thickly.

She stood in the centre of the ugly room meagrely lighted with dreary little globes of dim electricity, and she felt exquisitely liberated.—Liberated from that continuing echo of his original violent impact, and, with it, liberated from his love and from him, and from all compunction and feeling of implication.—

And it seemed to her that, inexplicably but wonderfully, she was somehow liberated even from the necessity of further thought,—she had perhaps done so much thinking and formulating that everything seemed now delightfully settled and simple,—as though she would never have to think about herself again.

She went to bed, and slept the sleep of the tired, the innocent and the just.

THE day was mild, indeed almost balmy, under New York's brilliant sun, for the winds that blow along the side of March like the Zephyrs along the side of Botticelli's Venus, lay dormant. Thus Susanna remarked mentally as she walked across Central Park.

Susanna was on her way from the West side where she still lived with her aunt, eastward to Fifth Avenue, meaning to stop in at the Public Library before going to her study in Forty-ninth street. She had rented this place on her return from her European studies three years ago in order to be conveniently near to the Library, where her research work frequently took her, and also in order to be conveniently near to her friends. She had felt the need of a place of her own, where she might receive when she liked, and whom she liked, and in a setting she liked. She had by this time come to regard the place as her real home.

She walked quickly and with great elasticity. She was straighter and slimmer; in her sheath of tan cloth the delicate curves of her body were covered as with a bronze skin that obliterated the details and emphasized the contours of her delicious roundness. For her body had not parted with the budding quality of youth, it had but taken on that definiteness which stamps the structure of maturity. Likewise her head with its heavy waves of copper cut short in anticipation of the bobb—: it too held the dreaming outlook of adolescence in the starry eyes and the sweet corners of the slightly opened mouth. But the eyes, though still blind and blunt, were more brilliant, wider; and the mouth fuller and more relaxed; the tilt of the head was freer; the shape of the cheeks, the jaw, the oval of the face,—all were more strongly defined.

There was indeed in the physical portrait of Susanna's changed being—for such it was—the suggestion of a new assurance, of some satisfying certainty; there was serenity and poise. As though she, or some power for her, had decided just how far the not-herself might enter into herself, and having come to terms with it, had on these terms felt safe in giving to the external the

Love Days

freedom of her spirit. And as though this friendly truce had rendered the inflowing experience harmless, and had thereby liberated her spirit to even greater detachment from its encompassing reality. For her spirit seemed really to have withdrawn, unconcerned, from the sensitive receiving surface inward to the creative centers, where it spun its images and fancies: its reconstructions of the stuff of that reality whose power it thought to have broken.

Thus Susanna flashed past people in the morning sunshine, a tan and cream and copper young thing, lively and yet serene, amazingly carefree, shining with a secret and remote content.

As she walked, her mind was lazily occupied in wondering why her native park, through which she was hurrying both bodily and in feeling, was evocative of no appreciable sentiment, whereas the Bois, the Pincio, and even that flat little half portion of a park, Hyde Park, came to her from the recesses of her memory exuding the fragrance of romance. Yes, this Central Park was as bare of atmosphere as it was bare, ever increasingly, of trees; as its name, shared with stations and markets, was bare of charm. It looked, she concluded, as she concentrated upon it, a huge setting for some political or social happening whose character one could not foretell, but which might impregnate it with its own significance. And this, she thought, accounted for the air of languid expectancy it wore; the way it seemed to refrain from assuming a character of its own, the way it almost refrained from even growing! Certainly it seemed to grow as little as the laws of nature permitted. And that, Susanna concluded, was why, although she took pleasure in walking, she took no additional pleasure in walking on these asphalt trails.

And yet, today, in the setting of today,—so lovely, so spring-like, so surprising a day—, she continued to muse, any park became pleasant, generically, if not specifically. And if this was pleasant, how very lovely must the country be today. Her thoughts, flying out to it, reported a thousand little annunciations of the coming spring playing about in it. What a pity she did not own a car so that she could get out to the country whenever she felt the desire for a breath of spaciousness! Yes, she must buy one and learn to drive.— And she pictured herself at the steering gear of a sand-coloured roadster, dressed in grey suède; now that she had cut her hair it would be perfectly comfortable to

Susanna Moore's

be a chauffeuse. In the seat beside her she placed one by one her friends: her men friends. She saw each one of them distinctly, —his silhouette, his position as he turned to her, his various expressions and gestures as they, he and she, talked to one another. Some of them would talk incessantly, others would lounge silently, still others, taking off their hats, would sniff the air and feel exhilarated when she drove fast. But no one of them would interfere with the composure essential to safe driving.— Susanna sighed a funny short sigh compounded of several impatiences she did not recognize, but she overheard the sigh, and smiled sunnily at it.

At the corner of Fifth Avenue and Fifty-fifth street she was stopped by Miss Lamb, small, pinched, and looking cold in a caracul coat, because, after all, it still was March.

"Why, how do you do Susanna—I haven't seen you in an age. How have you been? I saw Ellen Brooks last week, and she told me that she had seen Mrs. Cathay recently, but not you.—Are you still studying hard?"

"Not exactly, Miss Lamb; you see I graduated from studying some time ago, at least the kind of studying one speaks of and receives diplomas for, and so forth. I'm working now." Susanna dimpled amiably.

"You're teaching, you mean?" Miss Lamb asked.

"No, not exactly; I'm not doing the kind of teaching one gets a title for in a school or University—I'm working for myself, occasionally publishing some trifling thing, and hoping some day to compile a real book."

"Indeed, and on what, Susanna? If I remember correctly you specialized in Greek."

"Yes, I did; and I do. The trouble is that so many others have too, that all the books seem to have got themselves written. But I live in the hope of having something new to impart some day."

"Well, one must have something definite to occupy oneself with, I suppose," said Miss Lamb, who looked upon professional, charitable and the less reliable social activities as essentially substitutes for marriage; "and Greek has always been considered an interesting study," she added dubiously.

"Oh, it is interesting," Susanna rejoined brightly and patiently;

Love Days

"not because it's an occupation, but in itself. Greek things have an undying charm, you know, like some people, rare people, and some works of art. Simply to associate with them is fascinating, and to be intimate with them is, well, entrancing, and to be an authority in regard to them must be as ecstatic as to have some great creative talent—at least almost, not quite, because it isn't you who imbue them with life, it's they who imbue you—" Susanna stopped here, remembering where she was. She smiled vaguely. "Well, I must be hurrying on now, Miss Lamb; so good-bye."

"Good-bye, Susanna, do come to see me, I'm at home every Friday after three."

"I would indeed, Miss Lamb, but I never pay calls; I haven't the time; but thank you for stopping."

Susanna walked on rapidly, and for a block Miss Lamb was a dim memory; after that she faded away.

Miss Lamb, on the other hand, walked on less rapidly, and for the remainder of her constitutional Susanna led the ghostly side-life one leads in the minds of others. To be sure, Susanna would not have recognized herself had she encountered the Susanna of Miss Lamb's apperceptions; nevertheless there she was, Miss Lamb's Susanna, a perfectly valid conceptual reality, even though it corresponded to nothing in nature, any more than do winged Victories, Centaurs, or Amourettes.

Miss Lamb's fancies, then, springing off from Susanna, across a chasm, into the past—the Susanna-less past—, encountered and mingled with her memories of Susanna's parents, with whom she had been but slightly acquainted, but of whom she had heard much. Susanna's mother reappeared in the locus of Miss Lamb's head as a frail young woman with gorgeous and much discussed red hair, and much discussed leanings toward art, if a strong inclination in that direction, some contact, and no talent may thus be described. This inclination had led her family, whose attitude toward the artistic, contrariwise, was so to say bent backward, deflected and distant, to wonder at her, admire her, pamper her, and treat her, in a word, "en génie." And when she surprised every one by marrying in as rational a manner as though she had neither red hair nor artistic dreams, it was Roger Moore to

Susanna Moore's

whom she chose to discharge her conjugal obligations, while intending to continue her flirtation with art.

A few years after their marriage, however, Moore's promising career as mining engineer came to an end; tuberculosis laid him low. One next heard that the family had transplanted itself to Switzerland, where Moore died a year or two later.

Miss Lamb remembered Francia Moore, though dimly enough, as a drooping widow. She remembered hearing of the family's unavailing efforts to rouse her from her lethargy, to inflame her supposedly smouldering interest in her child, and as a last expedient to try to revive her interest in painting. And she well remembered her sister Mrs. Cathay's despondency when in spite of her great devotion Francia quickly faded away until death freed her from her too heavy burden of feeling.

Susanna was adopted by Mrs. Cathay, though whether or not legally Miss Lamb did not know. Neither could she recall that Susanna had excited any especial notice until she entered college at a time when entering college was still a comparative novelty, and hence ranked as an achievement, though one of dubious worth. From that time on Susanna was never completely out of the eye of Miss Lamb's set. She was introduced, and appeared regularly at evening affairs for a few years, and after that fitfully, as certain actresses appear in the metropolis only in the height of the season. One heard Susanna's name coupled with those of a number of men; in fact with rather too many, so that one learned to discredit the implications. One heard of her in Arizona, on ranches, in queer artistic colonies, in what-not! . . . Altogether an odd and erratic course for Mrs. Cathay's niece to pursue, and leading her, in time, to European Universities, and now to Greek work of some kind; clipped hair; a "studio" as Miss Lamb called it, and—Bohemian circles.

Miss Lamb sighed. Bohemian was to her the quality common to all circles outside her own and those intersecting with her own. To her mind Mrs. Stanley Ellis, who had horrified people by taking the convalescing headdresser to whom she owed her golden hair for a drive, was dipping in the same muggy pond in Bohemia as was Mrs. Vincent Curtis, when she entertained the decorated portraitist Blanchard, or the famous violinist Meissner. For in Miss Lamb's system of values pictures might indeed be respectable,

Love Days

but not their painters; books might also be, and sometimes were, but their authors very rarely; and although so-called classical music, and certainly church music was undeniably respectable, its creators and interpreters were not: they were Bohemian. And it was with those long-haired persons—or if short-haired, short-haired only in the sense that their long hair had been clipped—, it was with these that Susanna Moore, even though studying Greek, associated, and was constantly seen.

Miss Lamb sighed again; a sigh of regret for the restlessness of the age in which she was living, a restlessness which had at first sought satisfaction in uplift—in charitable and slumming amusements—, and now was seeking it in downdrop, as it were,—in the mysterious excitements and strange practices of Bohemia.

Miss Lamb after a time sighed again; a sigh of content. How fortunate that she should be untouched by all of this, satisfied with unquestioned amusements: bridge, shopping, driving, luncheons, and the company of her own class. She dismissed Susanna from her mind, and spent it (her mind) in the appreciation of how fortunate and comfortable she was, *as she was*. . . .

Susanna proceeded down the Avenue. It was still early, and pattern was still perceptible in the shifting of the crowds that moved, dwarfed and ant-like, beneath the high buildings and the bright ascending dome of blue air. Little groups formed, resolved and re-formed, with plenty of space between; dark little groups, from which an occasional red hat, green feather, and terra-cotta coat stood out, muggily. Really gay notes struck only from the colourful shopwindows, from their background of bright white stone and from the blue, blue sky.

Susanna glanced at a window now and again to see whether it contained anything beautiful, or anything different from what she had seen on her last walk past it. There had been a gillet in the Maison de Linges, and a faïence zebra at Quatfus she had last week thought of acquiring; when today she passed these two points of major interest she failed to notice them,—her thoughts were elsewhere.

She was at the moment in fact absorbed in considering how to break some of her day's appointments. There were too many of them; her day would be crowded and hurried, and she hated these

Susanna Moore's

qualities. She disliked indeed to be bound at all by engagements, but since such bondage was inevitable in social intercourse, she accepted it in principle, and taking it lightly in practice, broke her engagements with peace of mind and considerable ease.

There was, then, the eleven o'clock appointment in her study with Professor Emery to consider their co-operation in the article for the *Classical Review*; there was her one-thirty luncheon engagement with her aunt and that Mrs. Lowden who wished to meet her, an unrequited wish; and the five o'clock lecture at Columbia; and the Mythological Ball to which she had promised to go with the Lemaires and Turro.

Susanna retarded her pace, as though by refusing to approach these involvements she might escape them. Such a too-lovely day for all this stuffing. . . . And yet, on the other hand, too lovely a day, too, to spend in explaining and upsetting and re-arranging. . . . After all it might be easier to leave things as they were. . . . And, after all, might not anything be borne for the sake of this lovely tepid blue setting. . . .

She sauntered on, undecided, hesitating. . . . Her roving eye alighted on the window of a sport's shop, and at once, re-enveloped in her recent vision of her motor ride into the country, she entered the store and asked to see an outfit. She tried on various coats, caps and hoods of tan, grey, green, leather and cloth, and pirouetted before the mirror to the strains of the saleslady's encouraging comment. Decidedly, she thought, she looked all wrong in these things: like an automobile accessories ad. But she bought a suède helmet with the idea of foreshadowing by suggestion the time when her impotent wish should give way to realization.

And as, omitting her visit to the Library, she slowly sauntered toward her study in the sunshine, it seemed to her that she had somehow through this so very slight deviation broken up the rigidity of the foreseen, and destroyed its power over her spirit. For she felt again restored to her usual serenity, and alongside of the motor-riding visions there now ran patterns of the structure of the Emery-Moore article, even snatches of its text. She had accepted her day,—any way that it should turn out.

The study was situated on the second floor of a house on the north side of the street; one of the old brown stone houses that,

Love Days

newly façaded in white, and internally operated upon, had produced on each floor a front and a back room connected by bath and kitchenette.

Susanna occupied the larger sunny back room and shared the bath and kitchenette with the occupant of the front room. This person was her former maid Françoise, now become a dressmaker, to whom Susanna was lending the room until her financial status should equal what Susanna was pleased to consider her Gallic genius. On days when Françoise worked at home Susanna paid her many visits and showered her abundantly with unpractical advice. In return for the latter decorative and the formal useful interest Françoise took care of the apartment and assisted with Susanna's occasional parties, and maided Susanna when necessary.

A little self-operating elevator ran up the four flights of the house; but today Susanna ran up herself, which she did quite as quickly as the lift. She let herself in, slammed the door, pulled off her coat and furs and sank down on the sofa with an unreasonable feeling of elation. Here she sat or lay, legs crossed and head thrown back, wondering why she felt so pleased and so ready, when there was nothing in particular to be ready for,—certainly not Professor Emery.—

She looked about her leisurely, and she felt that she was shedding affection over all her property around her. Decidedly—she agreed with herself—this room was a pleasant place. . . . Not, indeed, as different as new friends always expected it to be, but nevertheless pleasant. . . . She continued to glance about her, smiling, and her room smiled back at her, a restrained, a subtle, quiet, sunny smile. In a general way this room made the impression of a mass of books on a billowing faded sea-green sea. French and Spanish notes, eighteenth century and modern, masculine and feminine melted together into a caressing, gay sobriety. The walls were covered with old brocade picked up in Spain, the curtains were full French taffeta affairs dyed to match, a refectory table, with drawers built in, served as desk; a Spanish *escritoire* and cabinets filled with porcelains of animals added their note of mellow colour. The right hand wall was completely taken up by Susanna's extensive library, the shelves of which were set into the wall, and in whose centre a black and gold grilled enclosure harboured the most precious volumes, which Susanna had arranged in imitation of the fashion of

Susanna Moore's

Spanish cloisters, face inward, golden leaves outward, so that a blaze of gold shone through the grill. Opposite, a large and luxurious sofa, a bergère, and various easy chairs of creams and greens surrounded the fire place: greens of faded meadows, of swamps, sea greens, and the green of sun-glows on sultry summer evenings.—All of the objects in this room had been selected and collected by Susanna herself, and she adored them with the combined loves of discovery, of irresponsible ownership and of beauty.

She rose to hang up her wraps and begin her day's work. The bath and dressing-room which she now entered, a black marble and mirrored affair with chinese-red appurtenances and white taffeta trimmings, likewise enjoyed her affectionate admiration, although in this chamber of smooth, cool surfaces and fixtures her feeling had a way of glancing off of them and settling on herself, its creator.

She hung up her things in the closet back of the sliding mirrors, and then, turning to her image, combed her short locks smoother, wet her eyebrows, which together with her lashes she had darkened artificially, thereby adding extraordinarily to the depth of her starry grey eyes, and finally, having given herself a sweet smile of approval, was ready to re-enter her study, when the sound of Françoise's whirring sewing machine arrested her.

Hurrying through the kitchenette she burst in upon Françoise. "Tiens, you are here, Françoise, after all!" she cried.

"Oui, Mademoiselle; and has Mademoiselle seen her messages on the desk? Non! Eh bien, there was a message from Professor Emery to say that he cannot come today and will Mademoiselle please call him up. And also from Mrs. Cathay a moment before Mademoiselle came in to say that she will not expect Mademoiselle to luncheon. Et encore: Mrs. Miller telephoned to ask Mademoiselle to lunch with her at the Café Pigeon or telephone to the contrary. M. Poledo telephoned too, but left no message. I wrote everything they said down; Mademoiselle will find it on her desk."

Susanna, feeling as though the heavens had opened and rained down time and space and variety on her, sighed ecstatically. "Thank you!—But why are you here? I didn't count on you today. Have you finished Mrs. Cotrell's tea-gown?"

She flopped down on a little straight backed chair, on which

Love Days

her relaxed pose bestowed the air of an armchair; Françoise sat in a similar chair on the other side of the sewing-machine by the window, upright, with head bent over her swiftly moving fingers.

Susanna considered her admiringly and affectionately, a little as she had considered her cherished furnishings. If Nattier had painted a Madonna of the people, she reflected, Françoise would have been the result. Her round and sweet pale oval had, she thought, the serene softness of the moon, and the low and silvery voice, gently enunciating Parisian French, was a little like a moonlight song over the meadows. Even were Françoise a dull and inefficient person, she concluded, she would not lack charm, and as, on the contrary, she had a certain genius for cutting to produce style as Susanna had formulated it, she was really quite thrilling,—like a work of art.

In her singing voice she was with some complacency recounting her latest successes when Susanna interposed: "What is it you are working at? I don't seem to recognize the part of the body it is designed to cover. Is it a boudoir cap for a giantess?"

Françoise bent her head over her work. "It is the body of a baby's dress, Mademoiselle," she whispered.

"Oh,"—Susanna, finding she had floundered into the heart of this dangerous subject, was paralyzed. Yet, something had to be said to this sweet woman whose tears were trickling through her lashes, Madonna-like. She laid her hand on the hand that had stopped sewing: "Ma pauvre Françoise," she said gently, "vous y pensez toujours?"

Françoise wiped her eyes. "Enfin, it is the grief of my life."

There was a certain finality in her tone, which Susanna caught; caught with happy relief, and prepared to rise and leave.

"Mademoiselle does not know; Mademoiselle never speaks of these things; Mademoiselle does not like to speak of these things," came plaintively in the low murmuring voice to her ears.

Trapped, Susanna settled in her chair again, and made an effort. She felt her effort as irksome, constraining, and she felt acutely the presence of the other's emotion: beyond that she felt little. Her effort was intellectual; she organized her states of consciousness with effort.

It's true, Françoise, that I don't speak much of these things. But it is because they are so remote from me, so quite out of my own life, you understand:—not because I don't take an interest,

Susanna Moore's

. . . You know that I care very much about what happens to you. . . . You know that, surely—." Susanna spoke softly and the soft whisper "*je sais bien*" floated back. The two voices floated through the room a little like echoes—the Frenchwoman's sing-song and Susanna's drawl—; hushed soft warm sounds, suitable media for hushed soft and warm emotions and their conceptual forms.

Susanna continued: "And I have often wondered about you—your tragedy—, and why things went so badly with you, who are so sweet and gentle and charming."

She paused; it flashed through her mind that confidences were bearable only when one was indifferent to them. . . . She found remaining in this close atmosphere almost unbearable indeed. . . . Yet she was constrained by her real affection for this miraculously gentle woman, and after another view of her sorrowful revealing face flushed with unshed tears, she burst forth, if a whispered caress suddenly decided upon may thus be described, "*Racontez moi un peu, chère Française.*"

And having said it, Susanna drew up a little more erect on her chair, curved her body toward the object of her attention, supporting it by her wrists on the edge of the seat, curved her head on her throat forward and down as though to listen to some difficultly remote sounds and fixed her frowning yet bland eyes on *Françoise's* lips, as she spoke. She presented the spectacle of a young creature determined upon offering herself emotionally to a stricken one, and all tightened up in the attempt.— And she paid the strictest attention—: she almost succeeded in preventing herself from watching *Françoise's* eyebrows travel, her pretty lips pucker and straighten, and the tears collect and dissipate as she murmured the story of her love-affair.

He was in service; she also; so they kept postponing their marriage until they should have laid enough aside to found with it a home, and live comfortably. He was a steady, good man; she had fallen into the arms of a good man, ah, oui! And this had gone on for years, and then the baby had started to come. After a time she had gone to the country to a woman she knew, and then to the hospital and then the baby had come.

"Ah, *Mademoiselle*, such a beautiful bébé: its little eyes looked into mine just as though they remembered me—remembered me well, and recognized me. Its little mouth—" and so forth.

Love Days

It was decided that they should now marry at once; as soon as she was well enough. Though Louis had saved far less than she had hoped, had in fact speculated and been unfortunate, yet with her savings they decided for Bébé's sake to marry. It was decided. Then, all being decided and even arranged, Bébé took sick—fever and so forth—and in two days it was all over—finished—.

Françoise bowed her head and trembled. Susanna noted the increased emotion and swallowed it bravely.

Françoise looked forward again in her recital. "Et puis, Mademoiselle," she resumed, and a look of slight astonishment reflected the recall of her past mood, "after Bébé died, I no longer loved Louis.—Something, I did not myself know what, was changed. I could not any longer endure his intimacy. I could not even endure his interest. He became for me as nothing at all, a feeble nothing. Compared with the bébé he was nothing—Enfin, je m'en fichais complètement."

There was a pause. Susanna was frowning into space.

"In fact, I have never understood it," Françoise pursued. "But it was very sad and a little terrible how he died for me together with Bébé,—how, in a word, I was bereaved of both."

She ended. Evidently, in her attempt to put the thing into words for another to understand, its intellectual mystery had come to the surface of her consciousness, for she ended calmly enough, and suspended, as it were, for Susanna's response.

And Susanna had the feeling that she had broken through some ice she was precariously skating on, and had fallen into the cold and real water. She gathered herself together to spring out. "Mais non, Françoise, it is plain enough. Voyez vous, what Louis meant to you had crystallized—flowered, you know—all concentrated into the baby, and the baby gone from you, all that he meant for you was gone too—" It here occurred to Susanna devastatingly for her fluency that if Louis' significance was to flower into Françoise's babies he was still potentially alive; and she wondered that Françoise had not grasped this.

"But Mademoiselle,"—Françoise had resumed her sewing, her tone was again conversational, she had for the time being relieved her soul by expression,—"I had thought to love him. I had thought to be happy in making him happy—It was as though the remembering eyes of the bébé had come between us, and filled me

Susanna Moore's

with a longing to make happy and to be happy through it alone.— And its little self still haunts me, just its own little self: never could another take its place.— You have no idea, Mademoiselle, how little I am interested in the baby who will wear this:—I think always of my own.” Françoise snapped her fingers with a certain ferocious pride as she pronounced these words, as though she were giving utterance to the most exalted and elevated of sentiments.

And so she was! A sudden flash of understanding illumined the affair for Susanna and made her feel that at last she had got into understanding contact with it. So she was! This yielding creature was, as a matter of fact, making the sacrifice, bringing the offering, of her complete natural selflessness, for the glorification of her lost child.

Susanna's eyes dilated into space; she tried to feel further into the other's unconscious soul. . . . She could not: her thoughts contracted back into this one intuition, into the insight that Françoise's whole interest and comfort in life lay in the sacrifice of her native self, in her spiritual flagellation, performed to keep green the memory of a loss that she wished to consider irreparable.

Illumined and radiant, Susanna came back to her. “Oh, Françoise,” she cried, and her voice rang with the tinkling tones and muffled undertones that made it so charming and at times so moving. “But I do understand, and you are quite wise to follow your heart which went from your man to your child! Who can say what are the laws of the heart! But love must obey the heart or die away from it! And your heart is still filled with love, happily, though it be without an object other than the memory of your child!—for the moment. . . . You shake your head, and perhaps you are right and I am wrong, and you will never again find some one to love. But who knows—who can say, dear Françoise! You are on the way to becoming a great modiste, and after a while you will be rich and independent and will do as you please: love or not, as you please. But it will be a new life and have charms other than the old, and will bring you new things. . . . Enfin, we shall see! Only hope, Françoise; hope is the great thing!

Susanna shook herself up, rose, and gave Françoise's shoulders an affectionate squeeze. Françoise shrugged a little and smiled a

Love Days

little, as one smiles at a well-meaning child, but also as one smiles under the spell of a fortune-teller who predicts wonderful things that don't seem possible, but may be.

With a final wave Susanna left the cloistral room and returned to her own. For a few moments she stood still in the centre of the study, abstractedly; and then, abstractedly, crossed over to a window and opened it. She leaned against its frame abstractedly and gazed up into the bright sky with bright unseeing eyes. For she felt bathed in a warm elation; dripping, as it were, with Francoise's pathos;—almost anointed. . . . Saturated with the sharp emotion of immediate contact with life. . . . And how easily—she thought—achieved! And how completely! For had she not in the flash of a moment grasped the full, hidden significance of this woman's bereavement! Yes, the actual significance of maternal love had come to her, Susanna! Through the miracle of intuitive imagination the conflict between the active mother and the passive lover had been bared to her!

Leaning against the casement, she continued for a time to try to exercise her new sympathetic sensitiveness that filled her with what felt like the pride of creation.—Tenuous apperceptions of pain and sorrow and love continued to drift across her mind, as, synchronously, she watched a few white clouds drift across the lacquered blue of the sky.—This day seemed now superlatively lovely, so different from the tight and hurried day of her sorry anticipations; loose, and full of spring-like balm, full of space and time, and in the middle of its hours this deep, tepid pool of sentimental melancholy that made her feel warm and melting. . . . She sighed with satisfaction.

Susanna sighed a sigh of satisfaction in the moment, yet through force of habit she now turned her thoughts to the task of determining what to do next, and through the force of habit she walked—though still abstractedly—to her bookshelves and climbed the ladder that ran along them on a rod. Here and there she fingered a volume absent-mindedly, and replaced it again, and in between her so tentative efforts she continued to muse.

She reflected that it was really quite unnecessary to do anything at all to encourage a day to grow. . . . Whether you so to say walked into it rudely, or waited for it to fall on you, it came along,—inevitably it came along. And was it not perhaps best to let it

Susanna Moore's

come nakedly, as it were, awaiting it empty-handed, as she was today doing? For when you walked into it with all your occupations on, were you not bound to attend to these and to miss it, the growing, swelling, fulfilling day, to miss the delicious taste of duration, the immediate contact with reality. . . .

Susanna sat on the top rung of the ladder, wrapt in reverie, dreamily pondering a plan for spoiling her sense of the charm of pure duration by hunting down Bergson and reading him on the subject. But no, her mood declined the suggestion of her mind; no, if one read at all on such a day, one must read idly, painting a thin pattern on the surface of the hours, on just their surface, leaving intact their own swelling, undulating shapes. . . .

And having made this concession to the habit of occupation she gave vague attention to the volume she held in her unknowing hand—: Shakespeare's sonnets. Why not, she reflected, becoming fully conscious of her hand's burden,—why not decorate this hour with fancies of love, attuned as she seemed today to be to love? Offering in this light, bright forenoon at the shrine of love, fresh and unspent, yet tapped already, as it were, ready with an outflowing and meeting sympathy,—might not Eros reveal himself to her in some new and scorchingly near way—?

Enchanted with everything,—her day, her mood, the lightness and easy swiftness of her free-floating fancies, she settled herself more firmly on her perch and dandled the sonnets in her hand. But no, her thoughts resumed, there's no sense in swimming around in just this. I shouldn't return with anything. It's Greek poetry translated and belated and I've already tried in vain to leap the step between the love of friendship and the love of sex, the kind of sex-love no instinct is supposed to have implanted. . . . She gave the book a little fling in the air and laughed. And if she recoiled, as she did, from the experiences of the seemingly elderly sonneteer,—could she, now, in fairness, she asked herself, be expected to share an elderly man's physical and emotional peculiarities? Any elderly man's! Any more than she could expect him to share hers! Perish the thought! Yet it was chiefly elderly males, elderly in experience anyhow, who wrote about love, even about woman's love, even young woman's fresh and ignorant love. Was it, Susanna pondered, that men stuffed into female forms all those of their emotional desires and aspirations that were frustrated or suppressed because in one way or another they were un-

Love Days

sanctified? Did this perhaps account for the numberless heroines of poems and novels who were not women, but men with female moments? . . .

But, of course, hardly anyone, not even women, thought in this way; every one seemed to accept the pronouncements of the elderly male. And of course there was nothing to attest to her own typicalness but her own feeling of certitude and health, and perhaps—no, certainly—the fact that men of all kinds fell in love with her. Just the bare fact, because generally it was apparent—they made it apparent—that accompanying their state of desiring her in the sense of love there was also a strange irritation and rejection due to some unusual unsatisfactoriness of herself as an object of love, some failure on her part to respond properly to their emotional and theoretical onslaughts—: to dissolve properly before them. . . .

Yes, that was it, that was exactly it—: she stubbornly remained what she so apparently was expected not to remain, although the object that had kindled the flame,—herself, namely. She, who was supposed to burn into something else, something more vague, indefinite, ashy,—she remained herself. She, who was, in a word, expected to dissolve, she remained solid. . . .

Susanna laughed—and smiled excitedly: she thought she had caught an illumined truth. A mother, she thought, might indeed, with a sort of recurrence of pre-natal desire, want her child to dissolve and again become a part of herself so that she might relive the spiritual ecstasy of creation. . . . Might perhaps men's love instincts be analogous to the maternal creative . . . ?

Susanna, with glittering eyes, thought for a moment to share the ecstatic desire of the male for a de-personalized, tabula-rasa sort of creature awaiting formation through his embrace, and his preliminary ecstatic excitement in reducing her to this state of nothingness. Yes, she approximately informed herself, smiling yet moved, when I love, I will dissolve. When finally the beautiful, fated creature rises on the horizon, he, like the sun, will dissolve me into dew and will suck me into his being and in the heavenly spaces, encompassed by his being, I shall ask myself whatever in the world was I in those distant days before the advent of his irresistible destructive radiance! . . .

She laughed, and replaced the book. What thoughts. . . what idle thoughts. . . . What puzzles! . . . But, after all, the

Susanna Moore's

sun was growing warmer, and the sky more golden, and she had bathed in her pleasant pool of real sentiment and had swum and not sunk, and she felt reasonable and healthy and filled with an interest in living so fond, so animating, so outgoing as to seem to be at least as worthy of the name of love as all these other sensations that had nothing to do with her.

She jumped from the ladder, stretched, twirled about, and once more wished ardently that she had a motor-car in which to run out to the big spaces of the country, alone—or with Turro. . . .

She sat down at her desk and found her various messages. She was to be at the Pigeon at one o'clock to meet the new celebrity, Pol Grodz, or telephone to the contrary. How nice it was that she was free to go, for she had heard of Grodz and had seen reproductions of his work and found it enchanting. How nice, how very nice of Marguerite to have remembered that she wished to meet him and to have arranged it so promptly. How nice Marguerite was in every way; how more than nice; how rare; how she did everything, even practical, sensible, utilitarian, unchosen things, picturesquely, *débonnairely*, *æsthetically*, as it were. And Susanna thought to see, looking at this quality of behaviour through the opaqueness of her own freedom from compulsion, something fine—something almost heroic.

About Grodz, too, she felt singularly optimistic. She remembered to have been told that he was unusually handsome, but as she knew that her taste and general opinion's rarely coincided, this could not account for her looking forward to him as to something material and important. To be sure, he suited her as an artist:—she really admired his work.

And Turro had 'phoned and left no message. She laughed. Of course not; what he usually said was too light and airy to condense into a message. Nevertheless he was charming and amusing, and existence without him would lose a good deal of its diverting flavour. . . . She had promised to go to the ball with him and the Lemaires and a party of their friends. What a frivol of a day! Still, there would be the afternoon in which to work if she cut out the lecture; and there still was a portion of the morning left.

Under the compulsion of this thought she drew a manuscript from a drawer and settled to the task of rereading it. It was a

Love Days

popular article on Greek dress promised to a popular magazine. And as she read with lips pursed disapprovingly and the light of cold reason in her eyes she realized suddenly that this thing was bad,—that she had not succeeded in converting dry scholarship into slippery information for an uninstructed public. How queer! she thought, shooting a look at the locked drawer in which she kept her strictly literary efforts, free verse poems and short fragments in prose for which she had not yet invented a name. For these personal expressions were untrammelled by the consciousness of their eventual public. How was that? Was it perhaps that creative work at the moment of contact with a public created, recreated that public? . . .

Well, however, that might be—Susanna, who was in no mood for abstract thought, but was in a mood for deeds, decided,—this thing, this limping thing that dragged its learning with it like a chain and ball should not live to limp. She tore it up with some pleasure and threw it in the basket and sighed a sigh of relief. . . . Miraculously everything in this blessed day was going wrong, differently that was, and hence right.

As she was inditing a note to the editor and simultaneously thinking about her own Greek costume for tonight's ball, the house telephone near the door jingled.

Susanna rose leisurely, stretched luxuriously, and slowly walked to the source of the noise.— There was this promising noise, she told herself, and beyond it and all around just a delicious hazy skyey background with a few shining streaks:—the luncheon with Grodz, and the ball with Turro. What a lovely, lovely day!

She took off the receiver. "Who is it, please?"

She heard: "It is I, Delaire, Susanna."

There was silence for a moment, the silence of surprise. Then: "Pierre, Pierre, is it really you! How awfully nice! Come up, tout de suite."

So Pierre was back from Paris, and he had not written, and no one had told her. . . . Susanna flushed with pleasure, and, laughing with pleasure, she held the door open for him, while he, to her amusement, came up in the slow lift. So like him to come up in the lift, even though it took twice as long! He never was hurried nor flurried, this Pierre, this Pierre Delaire, whose name so mysteriously suited him! Stone of air. . . . Hard and light;

106

Susanna Moore's

like stone dependable and definite, and immaterial and imponderable and cool like air; and as mysterious as their paradoxical combinations; and—

Here he was, leaving the lift and remembering to close the door carefully, and then turning to her with affectionate smiles.

Susanna held out her cheek; he kissed it lightly. She was but half conscious of his physical nearness, but she was at once intensely conscious of her increased comfort, expansion, and satisfaction in his presence.

Delaire spoke in French in the first excitement of their meeting.

"You are well? You look it. You didn't expect me so soon in New York, did you?"

"No, we didn't. Not until summer. And you, are you well, Pierrot?"

He had changed in the short year; she felt it, she saw it. "But this is a wonderful day for me, everything is different and better than it promised. And now you are in it. I am so very glad to see you back, Pierre, my dear, even if you have changed."

"You think I have, Susanna?"

He was already lighting a cigarette, seated opposite to Susanna, who slouched in the bergère in great content.

"I know so," she said. "You're a new creature. In less than a year you've become a new creature. "You're no longer Pierrot, you are Pierre. "You've shed the gamin, Pierre!"

"Vraiment!" he laughed, obviously pleased, but non-committal.

"Vraiment; I hardly know you," she continued, smiling at him happily. "It's not only your shaved head—and I won't tell you whether I like it or not—but I don't feel the same towards you." He raised his head and looked at her. "No, I mean you don't give me the same feeling, so you must be different."

"Why not you?" he asked conversationally, but with an attentive glance.

"Oh!" Susanna had not thought of this. "I may have. . . . Still, I don't feel changed. Do you think I have? Do I give you a different feeling, Pierre?"

"Who knows!—At any rate you have clipped your hair too, so, chère amie, you have nothing on me, as you say here."

Delaire spoke English much to Susanna's taste, meticulously and grammatically, and with a slow but flowing rhythm and a French inflection that seemed somehow to be imbedded in the mid-

Love Days

dle of the word and to radiate in both directions, instead of going along like a brake. His voice was light and sweet,—so really was he, she thought, as she absorbed him with her blunted stare. Most people considered him beautiful as well as irresistibly “sympathique,” but Susanna could not share this view of him. She thought rather that his delicate fairish classicality of a dry and cerebral quality had all of beauty except beauty’s peculiar thrill. And now, his head shorn of its most vital, fluid and adventurous feature, the long fair hair he brushed firmly back,—now his almost naked skull, though in itself correct enough, revealed with brutal frankness the structural bony materiality of the whole. He looked even less vitalized, less sappy than before, she thought; more rigid, more “nature morte.” How horrible of me to think so. . . .

“Anyway I’ve not cut mine for the same reason as you. I’ve cut mine to make myself more attractive—not less!” She laughed;—a teasing laugh.

“I’ll tell you why I’ve cut my hair if you want to know,” Delaire’s gentle, monotonous voice put in.

“But I don’t want to know. I don’t want to witness your capitulation to the laws of thought. For that’s what you’re doing in offering me a causal explanation, cher ami! Samson, you know, lost his strength with his hair: you seem to be in danger of losing your mystery!” She laughed teasingly still, and affectionately; he remained gravely non-committal. “Give me a cigarette to keep you company,” she pursued, “and tell me what you did in Paris.”

They spoke of Paris; the studios; chess; their friends. Finally he volunteered: “I didn’t play chess all the time; I began some canvases.”

“What kind? Cubist?”

“In form Cubist—but there is an ulterior intention which removes them from Cubism. I wanted to produce those impressions so painful to the eye which it sometimes receives from a moving picture when several objects move simultaneously at different velocities,—for instance in the picture of a race. Do you remember that we once saw one together and remarked on it? The eye became confused and the head a little dizzy. Eh bien, it interested me to get these same effects through static means.”

Susanna Moore's

Susanna laughed, diverted. Evidently "au fond" he was unchanged. "And was your experiment successful?" she asked.

"Fairly," he replied gravely, "though not with every one. But it took long, and I was not very well in Paris."

"Poor Pierrot!" Susanna crossed over and seated herself on the arm of his chair, taking his hand in hers. "Your heart?"

"There is nothing else that is wrong."

"We'll have to take care of you," Susanna, who did not think it was his heart nor any definite weakness, but something abstract and a little unreal, like his work, remarked, looking into his calm eyes affectionately and, as she thought, consolingly.

She felt him pleasantly as a charming and rare creature, sensitive, delicate and with a rare polished finish. She knew him as set, definitely set somehow, in character, and subtly eccentric in intellect, although she was unable to follow rationally his philosophy of complete rejection of what he conceived to be the trammels of convention,—and convention for him included all intellectual tools that had become masters: language and logic itself, and indeed all forms of culture that were past and yet potent.

And Susanna who had accepted logic as a condition of life as she lived it, and could therefore not agree with an attitude of denying all thought and all value and still continuing life, and could, in this, Delaire's, case understand it neither in point of origin or inspiration,—Susanna yet did not completely reject his attitude. She regarded it more or less as the intellectual-aesthetic mask of his cerebral personality and held it off, as it were, and contemplated it, while she accepted warmly his so sympathetic and charming practical self.

"You know I'm just as fond of you in spite of your cropped head and the torn veils of mystery," she continued. "We're great friends in spite of all, Pierre?" For they had agreed that intellectual divergence when acknowledged was no stumbling block to sympathy,—though it was an agreement that Susanna found herself reasserting every now and then.

"In spite of all," he echoed. "And you, Susanna, what has happened to you in the meanwhile? Are you happy?"

Susanna stared in surprise. "Of course I'm happy. And if I were not I—" she checked herself.

He interposed uneasily: "You wouldn't tell me?"

Love Days

"Pierre, I might tell you; but not in this way; not simply because you asked casually. How did it occur to you to ask at all?" He really must have changed a little, she thought.

"Oh, I don't know." He rose to light another cigarette. "Lucius is abroad and Landstreet is married—your dear friends. . . . Don't you weep for them?"

"Not when others like you are still here—or here again. Have you ever seen me weep really or figuratively for anyone, then, Pierrot?"

"No, it is why I like you."

Susanna burst out laughing. "An exquisite reason, my Pierrot! I hope that someday you will like me for a better one, a really charming reason you will not tell me—" she cast him a languishing look, and then laughed, amused, for he remained silent and grave. "Or—" she resumed, "if you won't like me for that sweet reason—though I shall continue to cherish hopes—" she laughed some more, "at least you might like me in the way I like you—" She paused.

"And how is that?" he asked with "sang froid." "If I may be permitted to know?"

"It isn't because you are a cold-blooded fish and lose your head over no one and don't pretend to—though I like that, too, but—"

"Eh bien?"

"I like you for no strictly analysable reasons: I like you for reasons I don't know. . . ." She smiled sweetly. "So when you change horribly I go on liking you just the same. I like you because I feel happy in your presence, I feel nice and charming and happy; I like myself in the same space and time with yourself. . . . Someday you must like me for the same reasons. . . ." She looked into his immobile, unrevealing and so charming face tenderly, and added sweetly: "Never mind—you like me or you wouldn't be here, and I like you even though you won't play with me, Pierrot," and passing her hand over his cropped head she rose.

She handed him some sketches that had been made of her during his absence, asking his opinion of them. For though so radical a painter himself he was a most dependable judge of all forms of art, old and new. It was said that he had turned down many a lucrative job as first aid to ignorant dealers.

Susanna Moore's

"Not badly done, but not in the least like you," he pronounced.

"Oh, don't you think so? I thought it suggested me strongly."

"Comment—you think this suggests you—you think you're like this snaky woman?" he asked, surprised.

"I don't know—I really don't know much about myself, you know." Susanna lay back in her chair, her hands clasped behind her head, and smiled contentedly across at him. "I don't mind not knowing—: it makes everything that happens seem so unexpected and dramatic—an adventure really."

"And are you telling me that you like adventures!" Delaire laughed ironically, but his classic face seemed to inquire rather than scoff.

"But I love them," she replied.

"But you never have any," he objected.

"But I have them all the time, on the contrary," she insisted with astonished eyes.

"You wouldn't come abroad with me when I suggested it twenty-four hours before the boat sailed!" He laughed derisively but gently.

"But that wasn't because it would have been an adventure, but because I didn't want to!" she laughed gently.

"Parfaitement! You don't want adventure; you don't like them." He stated this with emphasis and satisfaction.

He thought that he had cornered her, and she seemed cornered, she admitted; there was here some sophistry she could not localize without thinking, and she did not want to think. And as it happened she did not need to, for a thought obligingly came to her.

"But you see," she said, "I regard the bare fact of your having asked me to go as an adventure in itself—unforeseen, unaccountable, fantastic, odd,—though pleasant."

Delaire burst into his rare explosive laughter.

"Sophist!" he commented.

"Probably—" Susanna went on undisturbed, now interested in a calm consideration of the notions that were sprouting in her mind, "probably when you suggested the same plan to your other women friends, it wasn't an adventure for them, but just a plan to be followed or not, because they, unlike me, don't vegetate in a protective crust of psychological ignorance—like a butterfly in a cocoon. They probably know exactly what to expect from their friends,—even from you. But I haven't the remotest idea. I,

Love Days

you see, lie curled up in my cocoon of ignorance, propelled by my innate impulses and tastes, as the earth is propelled on its axis, together with its encircling thick atmosphere, through some power of its own."

Susanna, lighting up to her improvisation, had straightened in her chair, assuming her mask of inspired muse, with wide-opened glittering darkening eyes, that looked as though, shot at their sisters in the heavens beyond the green ceiling, they had rebounded back again inward.

"Well?" he urged her on gently, watching her, fascinated, content.

"Well . . . Other bodies, on the contrary, comets, for instance, and meteors, fly about in space, propelled by gravitation, and one says that they have adventures when they bump into one another or are bumped into, or fall—fall—fall!" She laughed. "And all this not because of their own qualities, but because of gravitation—"

"Halte-là," Delaire interrupted with some animation, "there is something the matter with your picture. What did you say makes the earth revolve on its axis?"

"Don't be pedantic," Susanna resumed undisturbed. "Anyway the power *seems* to be generated from within, and one has the feeling of one's own pleasant movement dragging along the dense envelope of ignorance that protects one. And don't you see that for such a body everything penetrating the envelope would be an adventure: waves of light, of heat, of ether,—all that comes from the outside and gets in. Whereas comets bumping themselves out of shape, and letting fragments be bruised off, are really letting the impact of foreign bodies derange or even destroy their own native mechanism. Of course such occurrences are mis-called adventures; they're nothing but accidents,—accidental violations. . . ."

"Vraiment—" Pierre, amused, tried vainly to interrupt.

"The real external adventure, therefore—the great adventure—would be the rise of a new sun,—yes,—and through the operation of gravitation a new movement around the new sun, without loss of one's own. And there you are!"

"Well," Delaire coolly remarked, "you have your way of amusing yourself; but what you confide is limited in importance because you don't understand yourself, as you admit, *du reste*."

Susanna Moore's

"That's true. But occasionally I divine myself intuitively," she resumed, still amused, "and I now divine myself as a little body turning on its axis, awaiting a solar system to absorb without destroying it."

And Susanna, thinking that she had really very neatly connected this solar system image with her last, and that this day was very full of images—pleasantly so—, laughed her childish rippling laugh, and fell back in her chair, looking to Pierre for appreciation.

Failing to detect any, she rose, now declaiming theatrically: "Detached atom that you are, go whirl in your solitary spaces and search for my solar system; for my new sun." She placed her arms on his shoulders. "I'm glad you're back, Pierre dear; I missed you ever so much, did you miss me a little?" Her starry eyes were direct, affectionate; her lips smiled a sweet Leonardesque smile; the poise of her head was a little condescending, as though she were asking an adult question of a beloved child whom she might thereby be overtaking.

"I did," he replied in his slow quiet manner, flushing a very little. "And as that is the case it seems as though we ought at least to lunch together."

"Ciel, is it luncheon time already," and Susanna flew to the clock. "Not quite! I can't; I'm so sorry, Pierre, I'm lunching with Marguerite Miller, and I can't at the last minute refuse."

"Alone?" he asked.

"No, or I'd ask you to join us. It's her party for Grodz. Do you know him?"

"Not personally. I have seen his work."

"I've seen only reproductions, but judging by them it's really good. I'm really warm about it. It seems utterly modern, and yet to partake of the certainty of the Renaissance and its sense of harmony." She did not ask whether he agreed; it did not even occur to her. So he said nothing but a resigned: "I'll go then; you are in a hurry."

"Yes, I want to change my clothes to make an impression on him."

"You don't know him, then?"

"No, that's why I'm still so enthusiastic."

"Perhaps he is the sun you are looking for."

"Optimist! And besides, you are to look, not I."

"Bien!" he said, "I'll look, although, as you know, I don't

Love Days

recognize suns when I see them; they don't make me blink. Au revoir, then, and will you telephone?"

"Where to?" she asked at the door.

He gave her his number.

"Perhaps on Friday, for tea or dinner. You've told me nothing. Of course I didn't give you a chance, talking about myself. But then you never do anyway; it's always I who do the telling of everything."

"Everything?"

"Almost," she laughed.

"Exactly," he remarked.

"Isn't almost everything more than nothing in your mathematics?"

"More, but not better."

"We're even then."

"Au revoir, Susanna."

"A biento, bel ami." She smiled at him, waved him a kiss, and closed the door on him.

She closed the door on him, but while she was hurriedly getting ready for her luncheon he continued obstinately to dwell in her thoughts. She thought of him without jolts or jars, warmly, almost tenderly. She was truly glad he was back; she disliked his frequent absences in different parts of the world, not only because they deprived her of him, but because he seemed so little related to places that it was impossible to discern what geographical change could possibly mean to him, and disquieting that he nevertheless indulged in it.

Yes, she was sure of her warm feeling for him; she enjoyed him as some one satisfying to contemplate and to have companionship with, close companionship, close and parallel,—as companionship, after all, was. . . . There was a suggestion of the parallel about him, anyway, somehow . . . she wondered how . . . But no matter: she wanted him going side by side with her, parallel, within hailing distance.

Yes, she thought she was deeply fond of him; she thought he was dear to her in every way. Indeed, she really loved him, she thought; not half-consciously as she loved her old habitual friends, but delightfully, actively, interestedly and yet calmly, without the wish for complete intimacy. How strange, according

Susanna Moore's

to all norms,—and yet, how natural it felt. And he seemed to love her in the same simple and satisfied way.

Was friendship, ideal friendship, really love complete but for a desire for union,—was it? If so, theirs was far from ideal. There was not between them that degree of understanding and sympathy that could conceivably be intensified into a state of spiritual interpenetration. No, there was not this, there simply was not. Not so far. And what proof, after all had they given one another of unusual affection? . . . In complete surrender, surrender constitutes the proof . . . complete love being the proof of love . . . But what of friendship?

Was theirs then but a mediocre friendship? It might be—: there were whole universes of his she had no clue to, others in which she took no interest. There were all sorts of possessions of her own she felt no impulsion to share with him; there were points all over their natures which were untouched by each other. They, indeed, ran parallel.

On the other hand, there was the tenderness she felt for him, there was the charm of his physical fineness, there was the fascination that his spirit exercised over hers just because it was so different, and there was the desire for his presence. There was, finally, the happiness his presence bestowed on her.

No, it was not mediocre—their friendship, even though partial.

Perhaps complete love without desire was only words, not a state. Probably! Perhaps physical love did for spiritual love what the setting sun does for the stained-glass window: bring it to fulness and glory— Or what the dawn does for sleeping birds; or—or—

Susanna, adjusting to her body a white and gold embroidered chiton, narrow and slim, and clasping an old amber chain around her throat, tried to find the perfect comparison. But it proved difficult. It ought, she thought, to express the relation in such a way that the physical would alter and enhance the spiritual through a kind of saturation. As wine heightens the emotions, occurred to her—but was rejected.— And it was now too late to think of another. . . .

But she liked him, that was certain, and she wished him present almost every time she thought of him, even though she forgot him in between their meetings with dreadful ease. It was a pity she was not in love with him, nor he with her.— And it sud-

Love Days

denly came to her with a kind of cold logical conviction that this was the matter: he was not in love with her. If he were, she suddenly thought to know, if a great emotion had communicated itself from him to her,—it might have resulted in her falling in love. Instead, there was this strange tendency to forget him, not to be affected by him permanently owing to *his* strange tendency—strange in so positive a personality—to be neutral in relationship, so to say. And suddenly Susanna was quite certain that he forgot her in between their meetings even more completely than she forgot him.

Too bad, too bad that they had not fallen in love;—their love would perhaps have illumined for each the dark places of the other, and made each transparent for the other,—or not transparent so much as incandescent. And the miracle of spiritual interpenetration might have eventuated. . . .

She gave herself a last inspection: copper, white, gold, tan was her colour scheme. She was pleased with her appearance: she thought it very wonderful, though odd, that she had grown to be so much to her taste;—that she could derive so much enjoyment from this creature who was her external self.

She hurried through the library, making a grimace in the direction of Shakespeare's part of the shelves.

A love-morning, she thought; love tales, love poems, love thoughts,—everything but love practices. She laughed;—but she was rather glad that it was getting to be afternoon, with a prospective change of tone.

On the landing she perceived Turro running up the last flight of stairs.

"Well!" she ejaculated, standing still.

"I've come to fetch you to luncheon," he sang out gaily.

"But I'm going to lunch with Marguerite Miller!"

"So am I, so am I!" he continued gaily," that's why I've come for you—so that we can go together!" Poledo spoke in French for the most part; Susanna used French or English as the lesser or greater complexity of her communication dictated.

"How did you know that I'd want to go with you?" she asked, languidly inquiring.

"I don't care whether you want to or not, *chère*; I want to go with you. You know very well, Suze," he took her arm in his

Susanna Moore's

and raced her down the stairs, "you know that your feelings have nothing at all to do with mine! I want to walk with you because we look so well together—you fair and I dark, and both extremely handsome; and because you are always so perfectly shod; and because I adore being with you!"

They were downstairs and out of the house and walking in the lovely warm sun sedately.

Susanna inspected him with her surprised but unquestioning eyes.

"Why do you look at me like this?" he continued to burst forth genially. "Don't I look perfect? I myself think that I have a very handsome day today. When I looked in the mirror before coming, I said to myself, *tiens*, you are almost worthy of Suze today." He stuck his glass in his eye, and laughed in his happy, hearty, amused fashion that was saved from smugness by grace of his sophistication.

Susanna continued to give him her visual attention. He was very handsome in his obvious way; and he was contented, even happy, in his obvious way; and ready,—a little too ready. He therefore provided a theoretically satisfying spectacle.

"I'm looking at you to see whether it's anywhere written on you why you never begin any meeting where the acquaintance left off, but always from the very beginning again, with all your conversational tricks."

"Oh, I have a reason," he tried to interrupt, but was not heeded.

"Meeting you, Turro, is like taking up a book one is quite far along with and finding that the book insists on being commenced over again, every time, from the very first page,—every time, even if you lay it down for a few hours only. Why?"

Turro burst out laughing. When he was again composed, he turned to her and said in a much softened voice, "You are delicious; *je vous aime bien*. But if you always get on further in the book, what difference does it make?"

"The difference is that I'm beginning to know every word of the book by heart, and it bores me. Turro dear, I don't believe you realize at all that I've read the beginning a hundred times. You probably think that because you're new to somebody every day, you're generally speaking new,—new to everybody, even to us to whom you're quite old."

Love Days

'But, Suze dear, you forget that I cannot help it; I'm that way, I'm simple, hopelessly simple, and superficial and always the same! That's my rhythm; simple, superficial, unchanging! I can't become complex and profound and mysterious and capricious, even to please you. What would you have, *chère*?'"

"Anything," Susanna replied with judicious languor, "anything but the beginning, the tricks, the showing-off—call it exteriorization or what you will—, but it's childlike showing-off, and not always of things you are, more often of things you aren't."

Susanna was herself astonished at her severity which, to be sure, had not the slightest effect on its object. She did feel mildly annoyed at him—she wondered why. Was it because she was keyed up to a new person and was getting this habitual person, or was it simply that his unchanging bland good temper had got on her nerves? . . . He was continuing to say often-said things about himself, laughing happily. If only he would stop laughing, she wished! . . . How differently she had foreseen the luncheon for Grodz—: Grodz, herself, Marguerite of course, and perhaps Edward. And now Turro was going to be there like a noisy accompaniment to a song, never to be ignored.

"What a beautiful day," he was saying, "I feel so perfectly happy today, with you by my side. I'm not sure we shan't get on to quite a new chapter in the book today— When one gets to volume 2 one often, you know, mislays volume 1;—can't you conceive of that?" he asked, with his apparently so harmless gaiety.

Susanna turned her visual attention to him again. Anyone with eyes would notice him; handsome, very foreign, smartly and carefully turned out, spirited, and happy looking. He claimed to be of mixed Latin ancestry, but Susanna felt in him more strongly than the Latin, some Oriental strain,—perhaps the Spanish Moor was not too remote a progenitor. Certainly one could, without the slightest strain on the imagination, visualize him in flowing Arab draperies flying, a white spot on a black horse, across the desert.

The finest thing about him, physically, was, she found, the way his dark head sat on his throat, and his throat on his shoulders, and the well-defined jaws and Adam's apple that gave to his head its sharp strong outline. The finest thing in his expression were his eyes, dark pools of oil, as some one had called

Susanna Moore's

them, eyes which could and did light up with an eager, a genuine, and, in a sense, an innocent enthusiasm. His mouth Susanna liked less; though it was covered by a small moustache, she divined it to be smug. And why not?— And she liked still less the very substantial materiality of his handsome body; it was, so to say, the thick wall against which her heart struck, she occasionally thought, though hastily and without conviction.

"If I get on a chapter, it will be after we part, not while we're together," she was saying, smiling again. "It's strange, Turro, but all my new impressions of you come in your absences."

"Really?" he asked, interested, as always, in talk about himself, and turning to her from his characteristic eager survey of passers-by. "How is that?"

"You see, all I have to do is to think things of you," she fabricated, "the kind of things that feed my interest and affection— And then we meet and everything goes back to the beginning; impressions, interest, affection. So I think I'll compose volume 2 myself."

He laughed again, appreciatively. "You will tell me about your volume 2 at luncheon; I shall sit next to you."

"You shall not," very decidedly from Susanna.

"Really, Suzanne, you do not wish me to?" Turro looked genuinely astonished and hurt.

"But I want to talk to Grodz, of course—a new book, you understand."

"Grodz?" he asked, "Pol Grodz? Is he to be there?"

"The luncheon is given for him. Do you know him?"

"Mais oui," he said with a momentary frown. "So you are to meet Grodz? You won't like him. Not as much as me, at least; not nearly as much as me!" He laughed heartily again and looked at Susanna. "Don't look so disgusted, chère," he laughed; "remember, the wish is father to the thought."

They had reached the threshold of the restaurant. Poledo had stuck his glass in his nearsighted eye and was looking for their party; Susanna was already half way there when he discovered them, and followed.

Turro sat beside Susanna after all—: Grodz had simply not turned up.

Marguerite was displeased; her husband Edward Miller, renowned composer and pianist, at the moment busily talking and

Love Days

eating, was entirely indifferent; Mme. Elvira, renowned soprano, busily amusing and being flattered by Bornsan, renowned musical critic, was oblivious; Flavelle, renowned art critic, propagandist and guide to Grodz, was consolable by Mrs. Bailiss, renowned collector and employer of renowned art critics. Only Susanna was dejected. And Turro sat beside her.

"You are sitting beside me, *chère*, after all," he said in high good humour. "Is it so very dreadful, Suze?"

Susanna gazed at him absent-mindedly. "I am *so* disappointed," she announced to the table.

"What are you disappointed about?" from Edward Miller.

"About Grodz."

"He'll jolly well have to wait a long time before I ask him again," from Marguerite. "I don't like this sort of thing, this sort of nonsense. It bores me awfully when people of his size think they've got to make a sensation by forgetting to keep their engagements! It's too cheap for a man of his real importance."

"Not at all, not at all!" Flavelle broke in with gentle snap. "It's great, great! Here we are all talking about him, regretting him! Great advertisement! Clever, clever! But for missing a charming party! Charming luncheon! Charming company! Charming, charming!"

"He probably simply forgot to come," Poledo offered; "that can happen to anyone."

"Of course," Susanna seconded warmly.

"Very well, let's not talk about him," Marguerite settled, "let's drop him into oblivion and get even with him."

"Oh, no," Susanna drawled, "I came to meet him, and I want him in some form. Flavelle, please talk about him to me if the others don't want to hear."

Miller, however, interposed and while dressing a salad for himself, an operation which engaged his major attention, he threw in: "What, my dear Susanna, do you suppose there is to be said about him? His work says what there is good to be said about him: he has said it himself in his work. He says pretty good things about himself otherwise, too, and quite unnecessarily since he's a great talent; but he's become an egocentric—conceited—boring—egoist since he's the rage." Miller shouted this in his fashion with amusingly dramatic emphasis and with the cultivated intonation of an actor. "Before that he was a poor struggling young

Susanna Moore's

genius who hadn't time to talk about himself but attended to his business, which was to produce pictures that satisfied himself, and was glad and content if his work progressed and he found an omelette and a glass of absinthe or whatever he drinks, somewhere."

"Prejudiced, prejudiced! Genius—vitality makes him talk! Talks freshly, as he sees! Talk passing, work enduring! Talk's not important—self-consciousness is important!"

"I agree with you," Susanna fell in warmly. "What does he look like, Marguerite?"

"He's handsome in an unusual way. Delicate and yet very—very male. Yet he's—"

"He's half-starved looking, that's what he looks like," her husband interrupted; "and it's because he's unconscious of when he eats and what he eats. He eats in a kind of hurried cataleptic state that makes you feel sorry for the food, when it's good."

Miller was himself in appearance a handsome *bon viveur*, middle-aged, Van-Dyked, eyeglasses dangling on a black ribbon against a light waistcoat. But for his living, dancing eyes and his stupendous vitality no one would have divined him as an artist, while the only external indication that he was a musician was his love of good food, the qualifying adjective bestowing upon his love the discrimination which distinguished it from mere appetite.

Marguerite, his wife, presented herself to Susanna in the aspect of hamadryad; wooden yet willowy, clean-cut and a little hard in a fair Saxon way, combining grace and rigidity, and with periods of dryness and barrenness, when her spirit went naked of the emanations that made of her in her times of sap and blossom so exhaling, so rich, so scented a personality.

This couple, composer and impresario—for Marguerite had worked herself up to an important professional position—, this colourful couple of two units, each one of which was strongly marked and divergent in type from the other, and each of which claimed complete independence, had nevertheless, Susanna thought, coloured off on one another in the oddest way. As now she listened to Marguerite clothing her thoughts in Edward's flamboyant language which sat on her a little as peonies might sit, grafted on the swaying branches of a willow, she again became conscious of their strange fusion; and the formulation she had

Love Days

once found for it, together with the occasion that had brought it forth, recurred with great vividness to her memory.

She saw, she felt, herself transplanted a year back into time, and a mile up into space, walking home in the dusk of a late afternoon from the Miller's with Lucius. She heard herself saying: "Instead of condensing into the classical one of the connubial relation, the Millers have expanded into four: their original selves and two new personalities. . . ." She heard Lucius' tired, metallic voice answer unsympathetically: "If they're two new persons they aren't the old ones any more and they're still two." And their subsequent talk unfolded in her memory with the same strange distinctness.

"I thought of that," she had answered, laughing. "But if I were to say that they had expanded into two, I should be violating mathematical law, since they are already two and since the process of expansion must proceed either from something less than two to two, or from two to something greater than two. . . . The four is at least mathematically the way to put it, isn't it?"

"Dear Susanna," he had then said, "what a lot of time you have for nonsense. It seems to me that you are neither young enough nor old enough to play with life as a continual attitude, my dear. Childhood plays before it feels, and middle-age begins again to play after it has ceased to feel, but youth is serious and acts for ends, and suffers for acts."

Lucius had himself looked strangely serious and yet middle-aged to her, as she had retorted: "Then you, dear Lucius, must be much younger than you look, and I'll admit that there is a grain of truth in what you say. There must be, if you say it, omniscient*as you are. It's certain that if I were very serious I'd be more complete, more interesting, and unhappy enough to please anybody, even you."

The omniscient Lucius had chortled. "Why," he asked, "do you suppose that I should like you to be unhappy?"

"I don't suppose precisely that. But you and plenty of others want me to be different from what I am now, when I'm happy, so you can't care whether I'm happy or unhappy."

"I know nothing of the others, and I don't know that I care to be bunched up with the rest of your associates of the present."

Susanna Moore's

"Oh," she had breathed, squeezing his arm through which she had put hers, "my new friends don't please you?"

"They do not. It's a puzzle to me what you find in a set of people who are satisfied to have you open your door on a crack and shove them out before they are as much as entering. As far as I can make them out they are a pack of vagabonds, spiritually speaking, and they will make one of you if you don't escape in time," he had said with some heat.

She had then withdrawn her arm from his and had felt the friendliness withdraw from her eyes. "I won't have you say these things of them," she had retorted. "Your set is more intellectual, yes; and that's why they devote themselves to science and social problems—things they can use their minds on. But I know them and I don't believe that as individuals they are a bit more vital or free or in any sense important than mine, my artists and scholars and philanderers,—philanderers with life. And as associates, you know, really most of yours are dull and ridiculous. I feel them to be ridiculous, anyway . . . pretentious, only half-self-conscious physically, over-conscious mentally. . . . I object to having to laugh at my friends inwardly. And I object to looking at half-conscious undisciplined bodies in ugly neglected clothes," she had ended hotly.

"You are being childish, Susanna," he had said, but mildly, and after a moment, hesitatingly: "If you object to ugliness—how about me?"

"Oh, but I don't think you ugly," she had said, feeling sweet again. "I find you picturesque, as long as you ask me! A picturesque composite of Dante, of an austere Hebrew prophet—Joshua, perhaps—and a naughty priest!" She had replaced her arm in his; paying Lucius compliments was sport. "Most people would not consider you handsome—and don't. But to me you are attractive by suggestion, you see, and by some strange satisfactoriness that your lean pseudo-asceticism has for my taste." She warmed up to her improvisation. "Your little giggly chuckle, and your nice smiling teeth coming unexpectedly out of the centre of your austere countenance, your slow reflective movements, so thoughtful, so saturated, as it were, with the thoughts you have over from the over-supply in your brain, your—"

"Oh, Susanna," he had interrupted, chuckling nevertheless, "give it up; it isn't coming off well."

Love Days

"Isn't it, Lucius? I thought it was, rather. But if you say not, why then it isn't, for I further acknowledge that for me you have the value of the unfoolable, the almost infallible. . . . That's why I'm worried when you find fault with me . . . Lucius . . . and you do so often. . . ."

The bored or tired timbre of Lucius' voice was sounding in her ears when, staring at her plate, Susanna had reached this point in the scene that, starting from a fresh impression of the Millers, rehearsed itself in her memory with so strangely real a flavour. And here her thoughts glided from her memories, and it suddenly struck her that Lucius, though in France, was nearer and more real than these friends here,—realer with the reality of her family; of Bridget; of Cæsar, the dog of her childhood; of the old friends of her youth. All of these seemed suddenly warmly real, irrespective of the quality of her relation to them. Marguerite, Edward, Turro,—talking and laughing within a foot of her—, these, somehow, seemed to depend for their reality on her reaction to them, on their power to stimulate her, Susanna. Disconnected from this they in a sense ceased to be real,—in the sense in which a motor ceases to be real when stalled. . . . It came to her, staring through the noisy spaces, that Lucius' inherent realness and Poledo's realness to affect her should be combined. . . .

Turro was touching her hand lightly. "Voilà the third time I try to make you hear me, Suze! You really are a droll child!"

Susanna became aware that almost all of them were observing her attentively. She remained silent.

Flavelle said: "Thinking of our genius?"

Marguerite said: "Really, Susan, it is extraordinary how insensitive you are to your surroundings. I do envy you your power to go off by yourself like this in the midst of a crowd."

"But you do the same, Marguerite; only you talk while you are off by yourself: you think loud, and I don't."

Marguerite's husband exploded with delighted laughter. "Excellent, excellent, Susanna! You've hit the nail on the head. That's Marguerite; you've got her— Of course she goes off by herself into her plans and recollections without bothering to take anyone along really, but trying to fool us into thinking she hasn't left us by talking out loud! That's it, that's exactly it."

Susanna Moore's

Marguerite leaned over and gave her husband a caress oscillating between an affectionate squeeze and a push. They liked to hear themselves discussed by one another. They were intensely interested in one another psychologically.

"Did I miss anything while I was away?" Susanna asked.

"You certainly did," Poledo replied. "You missed hearing an argument about modern music, in which I regret to say I was the only logical arguer."

"Great God!" Mme. Elvira protested. "Your friend Poledo considers Saint-Saëns and Vincent d'Indy modern music, and when we speak of Debussy and Ravel he insists on referring what we say to his fossils."

The art talk was resumed. The luncheon came to an end. Nothing more had been said about Grodz.

Susanna left with the unpleasant sensation of having sat down hungry and having had nothing to eat. "Stupid party," she breathed to her companion.

"I shall walk you home," the again accompanying Turro had vouchsafed.

"I'm not going home, thank you."

"No?"

"No. I feel that as I've come out for something I ought not to go home until I get it,—even if I don't get it. I mean home would seem like an additional obstacle to getting it—" Susanna laughed a little, but she frowned a little too.

"I suppose you are referring to Grodz in your complicated way?"

"You have divined it."

Poledo made a magnificent gesture. "If you want to go, of course I'll take you to his studio. Nothing simpler. He will be flattered and charmed. If you really want to go?"

"Oh but I do! And will he! And will you really take me?" Susanna cried. "And shall we go at once?"

"I regret—I cannot go at once. You forget that unfortunately I am a man with an occupation." His was the profession of Lalique, and he pretended to take it very seriously. "After five, if you wish." His manner was off-hand, meant to reprove her haste.

It was arranged. They were to meet in a picture shop near

Love Days

Grodz's atelier. They then parted; Susanna with a feeling that the day was not yet lost in flatness, and that Turro was being unusually useful and that it did not, somehow, become him.

As she walked up the Avenue, aimlessly, not even considering how to pass the hours before five, satisfied for the moment to be alone and walking in the fresh day, the luncheon assumed a bearable aspect, and returned to her mind spiced with the flavour of Lucius.

She suddenly thought to long for Lucius. She suddenly thought of Lucius as a jagged, ragged surface against which she might, if she felt inclined, tear herself into exquisite pain. If ever they got close enough together. . . . And yet again, the impulse to get together was wanting—

And suddenly with a deep blush it came to Susanna that she desired Lucius for her father; that there would be deep and exquisite happiness in having Lucius for a father. . . . In having his stiff arms about her while his homely extraordinary eyes and mouth instructed her and took her into the intimate realms of his intellect, lovingly, without irritation. For everything that intellect could grasp unaided, he seemed to grasp;—all the so complicated machinery of a changing world, the inexorable relationship of things, of ideas, he seemed to grasp and hold like a pattern in his mind. The main lines and the main roads of life,—all those things that eluded her, who loved the by-ways, the strolls, the climbs, the gardens and their wonders, hidden from the travellers of the high ways. On those things he would report, if he were her loving father, and she—she might perhaps be to him reflex and intuition and imagination, and interpret the blind desires and feelings he too must possess. There would perhaps be a real contact, and the kind of pleasant friction and laceration of the spirit that the saints seemed to have adored. . . .

But he wasn't her father . . . she had no father . . . she had no brother . . . she had no one from whom she could not slide and slip away; no one from whom, as things were, she did not slide away. . . .

Finding herself in the Park for the second time today, in a mellow balmy hour, now, with a warm sun and the static atmosphere of early afternoon, Susanna decided to walk home to see her aunt and arrange for the evening. But, after all, why was

126

Susanna Moore's

she going to this ball—it now seemed a monotonous prospect! They would dance,—yes, that was why she was willing to go. Turro danced divinely. He would be perfectly happy, just because of the spectacle of people looking well or looking ridiculous; the one charming him, who like herself was enamoured of beauty, and the other amusing him. In fact she had never seen him otherwise than enjoying himself a little more than was entirely attractive. . . . A little more obviously at least;—although she could not think why his rare *joie de vivre* should not always be attractive. . . .

And indeed she had at first been dazzled and beguiled by the generous overflow of his warm interest, and it had taken her a long time to realize that the flow had no direction and the warmth no degrees. His charming fluidity was in fact static, as it were, like a bubbling, babbling brook unaffected by the seasons. There were no quiet deep pools, no turbulent falls, no dams to break down; there was only a happy dancing noisy effervescing streamlet—quite harmless!

He, of course, would say: "It is my rhythm. You want the brook to be a river or an ocean, but it would cease to be a streamlet. I am just simple Turro." But was he simple Turro? . . . Could a man who looked like an Arab chief and had the most charming feminine intuitions when he wished to, and adored her, Susanna, be so very simple? . . . Was there behind this Turro who advertised himself as simple, perhaps another Turro, waiting—? Waiting for what—? Susanna got no further in her thinking, and turned from it and looked about. Entrance to Seventy-second street.

In less than five minutes she was at home. A home strangely unchanged since her college days; monument to the stability of Mrs. Cathay's lack of æsthetic fastidiousness. She spent the next hours with Bridget, hunting for her Greek draperies, cleaning the gold filet and sandals, pressing the pressable parts, shaking the pleated parts, trying them on with grimaces of disapproval at their appearance when put on over underthings, and finally packing them in a suitcase with the other necessities for the ball,—paint, powder and grease.

At four o'clock these somehow very boring preparations were completed, and as neither the motor nor Mrs. Cathay had turned

Love Days

up or been heard from, Susanna, leaving word that she would telephone in the evening before going to the ball, called a taxi and left.

What a frivol of a day, she commented for the second time today on her way downtown; what a dissipated day . . . everything beginning and breaking off . . . disconnected like a cinema. But the prospect of her visit to Grodz's studio had lost most of its flavour, since—she again thought—going there with Turro was like going accompanied by a noisy phonograph. For a moment indeed she considered giving it up and instead working at the Library; but she quickly realized that she was not in a working mood today, that she was too restless, yes, restless; more restless than she could remember to have been in years! What, she now wondered, was the matter with her? . . . Was it Turro who was spoiling her lovely mood that had matched this so lovely day?—And presently she wished him out of her day.—But this did not help matters: he stayed in it enveloped in his unsatisfactoriness.

Seated quite comfortably as she now was in the taxi, Susanna tried to think through for her enlightenment this sudden unsatisfactoriness of the delightful Turro, her diverting playmate, and she was sufficiently objective to ask herself what, after all, it was that she wanted of him?

Her intelligence put the question; some intuition supplied the answer: "*La plus belle fille ne peut donner que ce qu'elle a.*" Yes—she smiled—that was it: he had no more to give than he was, and she seemed to want more, something more real, or, at least, more concentrated. If he adored her in any sense, certainly it was not in the sense of a feeling that was the condensation of all his states and feelings, but rather in some detached and separate way . . . although he constantly boasted of harmony. Boasted—hateful word! But he did boast. He derived an enormous amount of enjoyment from talking himself up: he dwelt on his strong points as a proud breeder might on those of his best stock. And he forgave himself his faults with infinite forbearance. He really had a woman's love of self-examination: he had a woman's soul in a very male body. Too male, thought Susanna, or, rather, too body! Too much body: too separate, somehow, from his soul . . . like his clothes from his body. His clothes were smart, and they fitted well and were perfectly

Susanna Moore's

pressed, but they didn't take their shape from his body, as his body didn't take its shape from his soul,—his braggart, greedy, tolerant, moderate, sensitive, beauty-loving, happy soul.

For, she admitted, his soul was all of this. And it was for this that she liked him so well, and because she liked him so well she wished to like him still better . . . Perhaps this was why she was suddenly annoyed at him, because she wished to like him still better and could not! . . . How unjust then, thought Susanna; for certainly he did all that he could to encourage her! Was it then perhaps really herself again, as they all claimed, who was to blame; in whom there was something lacking;—was it perhaps really that she could not light up . . . light up . . .

The taxi stopped, and brought her thinking to an end—much to her relief.

Upstairs she found Françoise, seated exactly as she was six hours before, still sewing on the baby dress, and it struck Susanna as weirdly unreal, not that Françoise had been so permanent, but that she had been so various;—Françoise's performance giving the unreal taste to her own inconsequential goings-on of the last hours. But it was now almost time to go to Grodz's, and she hurried to the dressing-room to repair any damages the taxi ride might have inflicted. She found herself, however, very fit as she was; the creator of Grodz's work would like her in these light and slim trappings, she thought. . . .

Looking in for a moment at her study she found a good deal of mail on her desk, and sitting down for a moment to look it over, she promptly forgot the time, the place and all else: upon the termination of its perusal, she was already fifteen minutes behind time.

Contrite, she rushed into her coat and furs and snatching her gloves rushed downstairs and hailed a taxi. It brought her to the appointed meeting place in less than five minutes—: no Turro!

Twenty minutes late,—how extraordinary! Susanna was quite appalled. She now added rudeness to the list of his shortcomings to which she had so painfully given birth a little while before. And it did not occur to her that he might have waited the preceding twenty minutes, for she was at once struck by an in-

Love Days

spiration. She remembered Grodz's address; his place was but a block away—: she would quite simply not wait for Turro, but go there by herself!

She started immediately. After all, what more simple and direct than to go there and present herself! She now wondered greatly that she had not thought of this plan from the beginning, and she hurried along the block so that no late-arriving Turro might overtake her.

She reached the studio, down a long flight of stone steps, flushed, with brilliant eyes, a little breathless. In response to her impatient knock the door was opened by a man, model or servant, who directed her to a further door, saying that Monsieur was in there, "attendant du monde."

Susanna opened the indicated door, expecting she knew not what, and was greeted by a flood of cold white light coming in from the glass wall opposite. She shut the door, and leaning against it, blinking in the glare, looked about her. A huge, bare white room; one wall completely frescoed, with a scaffold before it; the other walls hung with pictures; and dotting the huge work-room, like bright bushes dotting a meadow, more pictures on easels. A few chairs and tables,—the rest white light, and white spaces, and air—

Susanna continued to lean against the door, darting enchanted glances at the coloured canvases around her. Yes, they dotted the white nothingness like bright blooming bushes, and like them they exhaled some strange strong scent, some insinuating scent, some exciting scent, like that of concentrated aliveness standing out from white nothingness. . . . And Susanna felt excited and looked excited,—very young, very lovely, very brilliant, very ardent, very excited. . . . Her relaxed body leaning against the door breathed ease, but her tilted head and shining glance adventure.

Thus Grodz found her when he entered the studio to greet Poledo and the lady announced by telephone.

One of Susanna's enchanted glances fell upon him as he entered and her flush deepened—she found him unexpectedly beautiful. She forthwith forgot about the impression she had speculated on; forgot to explain herself; forgot all but him; and smiling brilliantly, said sweetly in her most vibrant tones: "I

Susanna Moore's

like it here, I like it awfully," and threw back her head and laughed at her own *sans-gêne*.

Grodz's quick, puzzled glance gave way to one both eager and delighted; he walked over to her swiftly and taking the hand she held to him in both of his, he replied in quick, choppy, foreign English: "I like you to like it here. You have, I believe, fallen from Heaven, so it must be a compliment for you to like it here!" He waved one hand about. "Take it!"

Susanna gave the hand he still held a little shake that released it, and asked in a mock-impertinent drawl: "And are you Grodz?"

"I believe I am; and if you like it here, you must like me too, for I am part of it!"

"You look very well in it—in here." Susanna was still leaning against the door. "I like your—" she hesitated.

"Did you say 'I like you'?" he interrupted.

"No," she replied, "I was about to say 'I like your appearance'; at least I was about not to say it—but I thought it." She smiled at him, laughing a little, and blushing a little, as he stood close to her—the beautiful creature—devouring her with penetrating eyes. Yet she had plenty of self-possession left for private thoughts; and she thought among other things that these eyes that were upon her were less like eyes than like instruments for his use; and that at this moment they were like magnets,—mechanically, necessarily, drawing out some kind of response. Certainly one could not remain passive in the presence of this creature so definitely expecting something. . . . Perhaps a scream of some piercing variety, thought the excited Susanna, would be the ideal response.

While this was going through her head, she said quite composedly: "You are very like your work: you're very beautiful.—Let me see your things, while the light is sufficient," and drawing up, moved, and putting space between them, broke through the spell of his immanency.

She walked into the centre of the room; Grodz followed, and his face expressed all that it had before expressed with the perplexity emphasized.

"This is the first time you have seen my work?" he inquired.

"Yes," she answered, engrossed.

"You had perhaps heard of it?" he pursued.

Love Days

"Yes," she murmured, inattentive.

"Through friends, perhaps, Mademoiselle—Madame?" he continued.

"Oh, this is the one I know so well from reproductions, this lovely Virgin of the Mists or Venus of the Mists, or virginal Venus of the Mists!" she cried.

"What a good name! You like my things then?" He had thrown off his uncertainty and was again absorbed by her; eager, close, pressing.

"Yes, I really do." There was an excited smile on Susanna's lips and in her voice. "I have seldom felt so—so related to a work of art. There seems to be some kinship between us, really," she waved her arm about; "I seem to see something of myself in them, you know," she laughed a deprecating, tinkling laugh. "I can't account for it because you—"

"En effet," he burst forth, "it is true, ma parole! You do resemble my heads, with your dark red hair, and your skin pale, opaque, matte, cream, and the eyes purple-grey, and the long round throat,—it is what I have dreamed. Even the figures resemble you—perhaps!" He laughed a little. "But you are more beautiful, many times more beautiful! I believe you are very beautiful—!"

There was a touch of discovery in his tone of appraisal that struck Susanna queerly, but she had neither the time nor calm to think about it, for she interposed quickly: "I didn't mean to say quite that; I did not refer to physical resemblance. But I can see what you mean— Although they resemble yourself much more—they resemble yourself enormously!"

She stared at him exactly as she had stared at his pictures,—with brilliant, enthusiastic and appraising stares, quite impersonal and unreserved. She thought him ravishingly handsome, more than handsome,—beautiful. "You are very beautiful," she stated again and continued to stare.

The recipient of this compliment, who had just paid its pendant to the complimenter, was for a moment genuinely shocked by this frank avowal, and the following moment annoyed, conditions quite unnoticed by Susanna, so that, when she once more became aware of him as a person, so to say, he had already reached the third stage of his reaction, that of intense gratification.

Susanna Moore's

He registered intensity through posture. Instead of turning fully to Susanna—facing her—he remained turned a little aside, so that his eyes alone hit her squarely, hit her with an impact weighted and freighted, as it were, with the meaning of the communication that had been withdrawn from the rest of the body.—Thus, transfixed, he stood for some immobile moments—

Susanna understood the glance; she had encountered it frequently enough before, though not personally, but only on its way to other—and as she had thought easier—prey. For an instant she was close to bursting into laughter. Yet something restrained her, something external, she knew not what,—whether it was his beautiful disciplined mouth denying the crude, cold fire in his eyes, or whether it was simply the fact that this shooter of melodramatic glances was at the same time the focus and radiating centre of his so lovely works.

At any rate Susanna was, although no longer bewitched, arrested on the way to an expression of her sense of his funny crudity, and resumed—ignoring what she wished to ignore: “You really are the sun that radiates all these creations;—one has to think of you together with them;—you reflect their beauty;—you are imbued with them; do you see?” She smiled a pleased childish smile in which the corners of her lips curled up as though it were their permanent position, and her teeth seemed to sparkle.

“No—” he retained the hold of his eyes, but turned to her, or rather on her. “No, I do not see. I see only you!” He changed to French, which he spoke fluently. “You come here, dropping from Heaven, and say that you are related to my work,—to my spirit then;—you fill my room with your beauty, and you want me to listen to your theories, or analyses, or whatever they are—” He grabbed her hand and raised his voice to the pitch of shouting “You are adorable nevertheless. Who are you? I want to know!”

He held her hand and her arm; he was as close to the rest of her as he could be without touching her. His piercing words ceased. . . .

Susanna had a feeling that he was there—here—without reservation, on the point of swallowing her. . . . His physical nearness was, she vaguely realized, far from unpleasant, but his spiritual immediacy was not so far from it. . . . Flushing, she gathered together the forces in her that registered objection, and

Love Days

removing herself from him, she retorted airily and with that naïveté whose genuineness was attested to by its power to spring up in almost any situation: "Please don't come so close to me! You see I'm far-sighted, and when you come so close I can't see you, and it's the thing I most enjoy in your case,—and in that of your things." She walked into them, and continued her remarks in French, "These lovely things to which your spirit gives birth, and which your image inspires, or, I ought really to say, to which your spirit gives the form and for which your image supplies the material—" She laughed.

"Mon Dieu, mon Dieu, how many words she uses, even in French, this girl from Heaven! Where does she get them all from! Does one then say words all the time in Heaven,—has one nothing better to do in that much praised place! But sit down, unknown angel; here, here—sit down here," he swept a heap of things from a chair and dusted it with swift sure movements, "and we shall talk, then, since you are such a lover of talk."

Susanna sat down, laughing delightedly: she now found him charming. He seated himself on the floor at her feet and began to play with the cord of her tunic while he shot glances at her, glances less specialized, fairly general, in fact, with admiration, curiosity and amusement.

"How is it then in Heaven," he shot at her verbally, "when one is not inventing phrases; what does one do then?"

"One hunts around for some one to say them to, and if one doesn't find a friend, one selects a stranger."

"And then?"

"And then one examines him and the things he invents instead of phrases, whatever they happen to be, and if they are satisfactory, one says one's prettiest phrases to him."

"And when one has said them all?"

"How could one ever have said them all, since he would be a source of ever renewed inspiration?"

"Évidemment, évidemment!" He laughed ironically.

"And of course," Susanna went on, no longer flirting down at him, but gazing upward in her maenadic fashion, "if he should disappoint,—if the—"

"Never, never," he interrupted, and placed his lips on her hand that hung near them, and left them there.

Susanna Moore's

"Oh," Susanna commented, undecided.

He freed his lips long enough to say: "*Puisque cela ne vous empêche pas de dire vos phrases,*" and replaced them.

It was at this moment that Turro entered.

He entered, banged the door, and stood rooted, his eyes pulled into circles. "*Tiens, tiens,*" he managed.

Grodz rose. "Permit me to present you to a visitor from Heaven! M. Poledo, not from Heaven!"

"From Heaven, or in Heaven?" Turro asked as ironically as he was able to.

"She brings Heaven with her to mortals, and its occupations,—some of them; phrase-making for instance!" He was again at Susanna's side, his back turned to Poledo.

"Eh, bien, Suzanne," the latter said, "are you ready to leave?"

Grodz shot about. "You know one another, *tiens?*" he exclaimed.

"*Je crois bien!* Miss Moore was coming with me, as I telephoned to you; you did not remember?"

Grodz considered them for a moment with cold and furious eyes.

"*Tiens, tiens!*" He bowed to Susanna. "*Enchanté, Mlle—?*"

"*Angélique,*" Susanna supplied, "or *Célestine,—as you wish.*"

Poledo began loudly and elaborately to explain the situation as he walked about restlessly among the pictures in the now dusky room, glass screwed in his eye, which he directed alternately to the painted and the living figures; the latter again, since the first onslaught of clarification, in obviously intimate conversation.

Turro ceased to talk, returned and stood before them: "Well, Suzanne, are you coming or not?" he asked in a hurried indifferent tone quite lost on Susanna, who, in response, looked up at him helplessly and a little annoyed.

"But you've just come, *mon cher*, you cannot be ready to go already!"

"But I've just explained to you why I am obliged to go." And he repeated the recital of the complications that had arisen to the accompaniment of Grodz's "*mon Dieu, quelle histoire!*"s, and added at last: "And we must arrange about the ball this evening, our costumes and all. *Chère,*" he pleaded, "come with me now; we can return some other time."

Love Days

Susanna began to rise irresolutely. Grodz caught her hand to detain her. "Ma parole," he cried, "what an idea to leave me to solitude after staying but a few minutes! What right has he to drag you off, or has he a right?— And this evening again!—Tiens, tiens!" he ended uncertainly and unhappily.

"But he seems to want me to come so badly," Susanna remarked blandly.

"Tiens, and is that all that is necessary,—that one should want you to?" Grodz shouted excitedly. "But I, I want you to stay—a little while—a long while—all afternoon—all evening—always always—if you will!" He laughed a rippling laugh as he shot these temporal terms at her, but he laughed uncertainly; below the laughter there was the fury of frustration.

Susanna laughed too, and turned her head in Turro's direction. "But he so seldom wants anything badly, and he has the right of friendship—"

"Is that the only right, then, that he has?" Grodz exploded.

"Isn't that enough?" Susanna looked into his eyes. "Some day I hope you will claim those rights too. . . ."

"Never, never,—friendship, it does not exist for me,—not with you! It is an idea—not a reality! Other rights I may claim, if you permit,—" Grodz had again begun to shout, as he seemed to do when his impulse and his prudence conflicted and the former won out, "for you are charming as well as beautiful, and I am completely charmed!—I am, I believe, a little in love, I think I am going to—"

"Écoutez, mon cher," Poledo shouted too, now, "if you insist on declaring yourself to Miss Moore, you might at least choose a more suitable moment!"

"True, true; you are right!" Grodz shouted back. "I only want to warn you not to forestall me, since for the moment you are in possession! Do not abuse your advantage, that is all!" He turned on Susanna who stood near the door laughing, a little embarrassed and very excited. "Angel, when shall I see you again?"

"Soon, I hope, for I've liked it here." She gave to "liked" the melting tone of "loved."

"And me, have you liked me, dites?" His eager eyes were upon her; his poise, movement, expression—all—suggested an ardent embrace, tragically frustrated, inchoate, unrealized.

Susanna Moore's

Susanna was both amused and moved. "I don't know whether I like you," she opened her eyes languidly and dipped them deep into his, "but I feel you intensely."

The door was slammed violently; Poledo had done it, departing. The amatory group jumped, and before Grodz had a chance to stop her, Susanna had flung "telephone to me, Plaza 789, write it down" at him, and had escaped. She quickly caught up with Turro, laughing and a little breathless.

They walked up the stairs and into the street side by side in silence.

Susanna's eyes were more shining and dazed than ever, quite detached, in fact, from their visual surroundings, and her mouth smiled with that permanency which is the response to absent stimulation.

Turro, frowning, stuck his glass in his eye and twirled his cane airily; airily and agitatedly, while he straightened his straight shoulders once or twice as though to cast off an annoying load, and finally broke out: "I never should have believed, my dear, that you would let a 'type' like that flirt with you so—so indelicately, so outrageously. Je n'y comprends rien. . . ."

"No, neither do I;—I never should have believed it either," she drawled.

Turro shot a suspicious glance at her. "I assure you, my dear, I am not teasing you. I am completely bouleversé!"

"I too, I too." Susanna started to laugh gently, but the laugh died before it matured. "You think then that he was only flirting?" she asked.

He shot another glance at her to see whether she could be serious. She was staring before her in her blind fashion, absorbed.

His patience snapped. "You play the innocent . . . you speak like a child. One would suppose that you might be able to distinguish for yourself this type of Don Juan of the studio. He flirts, he falls in love, he falls out again, he falls in again, he flirts. . . . It is all the same thing,—a habit, that is all!"

But not even the "child" challenge had the power to rouse Susanna from the heavy, pressing depths of consciousness into which she had sunk in order to relive her past feeling, for all she vouchsafed in reply to Turro's stings was an absent-minded "Then you think he's really fallen in love. . . ."

Love Days

Poledo stopped dead for a moment—: “You are laughing at me, Suzanne. Voyons, ce n’est pas gentil,—ce n’est pas Suzanne,—I don’t recognize you, Suzanne; the Suzanne I adore,—the Suzanne I am a little in love with myself—: qu’avez vous, Suzanne?”

“You adore me, you are a little in love with me yourself,” Susanna chanted after him;—it was not at all certain that she was listening to him, or to herself.

They were at Susanna’s door.

“I should like to come up for a moment,” he said, cool but tense.

“Do, do,” she agreed sweetly, herself astonished at her unwillingness to part from him, who, she strangely felt, had for her some value unconnected with himself, which she would be losing if he went. . . .

They mounted silently in the lift; Susanna with the silence of the absent, Turro with the silence of the perplexed who wish to hide their perplexity.

“Come in,” Susanna invited sweetly; “shall we have Françoise make us tea?”

“Tea!” Turro exclaimed, “It’s almost dinner time, my child.”

“Really?” Susanna murmured, “well, let’s have it instead of dinner; I don’t feel like dining, anyway, I’m tired, or sleepy, or something. . . .” She threw her hat and coat in a chair, and sank into her bergère.

“Well, that’s a good sign for tonight,” Turro put in with an attempt at gaiety, “a good sign for my amusement!”

“Tonight?” Susanna interrogated. “Oh, the ball;—oh, I’m not going.”

Poledo flushed: “Why not? You promised to.”

“Oh, but it’s so much trouble getting into that ugly costume and all;—and—and I so sleepy!” She cocked her head to one side on her green pillow, and smiled up at him: “Now really, Turro my dear, we’ve seen quite enough of one another for one day;—and think of all the others who will be there for you, all your actresses and your singers besides your society friends;—you will be the most popular man there, and the most sought after;—you will not even notice that I am not there. . . .” Her voice

Susanna Moore's

trailed off in a murmur; she was again down below the threshold of apperception, and she followed her thoughts, as it were, by sliding further into her chair, where she lay, relaxed, with shining legs crossed, and her cream and copper head on its long stem fallen into the deep cushion like a heavy waxen flower.

Poledo was sniffing with some struggling emotion. He drew up a chair to hers, and raising her languid hand, he held it between his own: "Chère," he said as softly as he could, and he could when he would, "you are treating me very badly . . . you are making me very unhappy. . . . If I promised a thing I should let nothing in the world interfere . . . and you break your promise to me without a word: have I deserved this?"

Susanna moved her head on the pillow from its right profile to its left—: to him. She was mildly touched,—he seemed so hurt, so warm, so almost tender. And she herself felt so swimmingly warm and happy. She wished he would go away now that she was becoming aware of him and he was dragging her out of the lovely depths below the threshold of attention,—but she was touched by his sincerity and she had not the heart to send him away.

She smiled at him angelically: "Don't exaggerate, Turro; you know that you even break telephone engagements. But I'd hate to hurt your feelings if I were sure that I could—" She laughed a little. "But I simply can't go to that awful ball—I'm too—too sleepy." His face fell. "Perhaps I shall feel rested in a few hours;—if you want to leave me now and call me up at about nine?"

Her weakening encouraged him; his buoyancy began to revive. "But I don't want to at all. I want to stay here and awaken you now, and amuse you, and make you like me a little again, Suze darling. . . . You will, when I tell you how I adore you—your childish eyes, and your ravishing smile, and the dimples it makes, and your shining red hair, and the way you use your hands, and your grace, and even your way of making fun of me, and your illusions about life,—and yourself." He pressed her hand to his lips lightly, and continued: "I can't adore you differently from what my nature dictates,—but I do adore the real you—the child and goddess mixed! Child and goddess mixed,—

Love Days

how do you like that?" He laughed and gave her hand a little shake. "Suze, chère," he pleaded meltingly, "be a little nice to me. Don't you like a little being called a goddess and being adored by me?"

Susanna was affected only mechanically, so to say, by this effort of Turro's, and mechanically she sent him one of those knowing oblique glances which she had always in reserve for occasions when she wished to cover her indifference effectively.

Polledo received the glance, and dropped the hand, bursting into his first real laugh. "What a child you are after all," he said with some satisfaction.

Susanna joined in the laugh, for, certainly, she preferred him to laugh,—it put him back in the place he had seemed to be trying to leave. "Yes," she remarked brightly, leaning forward, "we are too well acquainted to fool one another with so simple an output of strategy. You can't fool me into believing you adore me, and I can't fool you into thinking I believe you do. Yet, in a way it is a pity . . . a pity . . . Turro dear. . . ."

Polledo's dark eyes grew inquiring: "What is a pity—Suze? That we can't fool one another?"

"No." Susanna lay back, considering Turro reflectively, lazily. He was very handsome tonight; rather wonderful to look at; sparkling, as it seemed, with something besides his habitual high spirits. How strange, it again struck Susanna, that this dark virile dramatic man should be so femininely sensitive to his own qualities, so variously self-conscious, so—so inhibited by his self-consciousness. It seemed a pity; something seemed a pity— And yet—here Grodz's dissolved image recondensed and interposed—, and yet it was really well enough as it was. . . . Yes, it was quite perfect as it was. . . .

She lapsed into silence, vaguely conscious of Grodz's image, forgetting both Turro and her train of thought.

He broke into her rapt silence. He drew his chair to hers with decision, placed his two hands over hers resting on the arms of the chair, and, bending to her and over her, dipped straight into her eyes.

And Susanna, highly sensitive to these unaccustomed gestures of intimate concentration on the part of Turro immediately became acutely and newly aware of him. And, adding itself to her excitement over his new intensity, and multiplying it, there was

Susanna Moore's

the excitement of its evoking and then merging with Grodz's intensity, which, since its first incision at their meeting, had been biting into her being unremittingly. Turro serious, Turro a little stirred, came upon her, already involved in a vague but far-reaching complex of seething feeling, like a sudden flood. . . . And she noted with dismay the invasion of this excitement, and its rise, and the threat it held to her self-possession.

It was her strong will to float and her habit of verbal expression that for a time saved her, as, at the second repetition of his question, her hands now pressed to his chest and his eyes burning into hers like deep shining lights, she bravely withdrew into herself in order to control and command her excitement into the boundaries of words.

She sat erect, tilting back her face, pale with effort, and in it her eyes, like pools of molten lead, were fixed on their joined hands that he held pressed to his chest.

"It's a *pity* that you didn't really adore me in some way akin to me—that I could understand . . . Because I believe it makes a difference— If you had greatly, you know. I believe it may be that love will generate love, after all—because fire begets fire . . . and heat generates life—doesn't it. . . . After all, the beauty of complete absorption may draw the other—hypnotize the other—into complete absorption. . . . If a man transforms himself—all of himself—into a single emotion—burns himself into a single emotion—he may become inflaming mayn't he . . . mustn't he. . . ."

Heedless of Turro's attempt to speak, and drawing on all the currents of erotic thought and experience of the day, Susanna continued painfully to try to distil their essence, no longer now in response to Turro, nor even to Grodz, but to the new susceptibilities she thought to feel in herself. "Perhaps," she continued, in a murmur, "perhaps the physical may—may saturate the spiritual, and make it liquid, fructifying, nourishing. . . . The two may really interact. Passion"—she flushed—"passion, running through the soul, like blood through the body . . . nourishing the soul . . . and the soul in turn flourishing, and flooding the body . . . until the two are merged into some—some incandescence—in which—new—" Her voice trailed off, and with an in-drawing of the breath like an inchoate sob she fell back on her cushion, exhausted; exhausted from her effort and her emotion,

Love Days

from the two together. She turned her face to her pillow with the movement of a child, for she felt near to tears, unaccountable ones, and she noticed that her body shook in the strangest way, as though it were near dissolution.

Astonished and troubled by her condition, Susanna gathered together her mental forces, and as she grew calmer she became aware of Turro,—that he was very close, stroking her hands and kissing them, and saying things, snatchy things, in a subdued voice. She lacked the strength to listen, but she disliked the touch of his moustache on her skin. She recalled, or it recalled, very accurately the sensation of Grodz's lips on the same hand: cool, smooth, a little violently firm, as it were.

She suddenly withdrew her hands and rose, to put an end to all this confusion. She rose swayingly, and as she strove to speak, and, instead, her lips trembled, she became frightened, and her perplexed frown gave to her eyes, as they roved about, the lost look that children sometimes have.

Turro caught her about the shoulders to support her; his eyes were now troubled with solicitude and compassion.

"Suzanne, chère," he murmured, holding her in his arms, "you are trembling . . . but you must not . . . you must not;—we are not worth it;—none of us! Ma petite Suze, calme-toi. Do you want me to tell you the truth, the only truth about these things,—about love?" he continued under a sudden inspiration, leading her to the sofa, where they seated themselves. "Chère, you imagine too much; you have illusions about these things.—I've always told you," he went on, and Susanna, regaining her composure with her power to direct her attention, noticed that he was indeed saying the same things he had so often said before, but instead of giving vociferous and combative utterance to them, was crooning them in rhythmic, comforting tones. Yes, it was comforting to have him bring her back to reality, no matter whose reality. He, at least, stood again with his feet on the ground, strong; and he held her down to it with him. Already she felt heavier and more normal. . . .

"I have told you," he was saying, "that you live in some false world built of your own illusions, and that you miss the reality, dear. If your illusions crumble—and they must—you will be very unhappy, dear. Shall I tell you something about love and adoration and friendship?"

Susanna Moore's

Susanna, her head against his shoulder, nodded, and smiled gratefully at him. "If you haven't told me already," she managed, smiling, to say. He was quite his old self again, she thought, and never had he seemed so nice, so very nice. Indeed she was fond of him, and she now regretted in a general way some reservations she had previously felt, and. . . .

"Chère," he began his lecture to the limp girl in his arm,—and his eyes shone now with the intellectual ardour to which she habitually stimulated him, and his free hand gesticulated largely,—“there is nothing more simple, primitive, necessary, and without mystery than passion, the passion of sex. It is pre-ordained, and I shall tell you why. It is pre-ordained, because originally man and woman were one; one single being; one and undivided in some manner we cannot now imagine:—one unified individual. And when the sexes parted and differentiated, and man lost the physical woman in him, and woman the man, then there began this eternal search for what was a part of each,—this torturing nostalgia one for the other, this eternal quest for satisfaction, for completion, for fulfilment.— Do you see, dear?”

“It's pretty; I like it,” Susanna breathed sweetly, wondering whether Turro had thought up his little legend, or had got it, mutilated, simplified and expurgated, as it were, from Plato. Was he then intellectually so much less sophisticated than herself, or was he being simple, sweetly simple, for her,—to console her? . . .

“So, you see,” he continued, “love is an elemental desire; inescapable, fated. As the ‘sacrés’ scientists say in their stupid way: it is an instinct implanted in man. It is, quite simply, a longing that can be satisfied simply enough through physical union. But, dear, it is at best a selfish thing,—it means the selfish experience of rapture, if you like, delicious physical rapture;—but nevertheless it is only a transitory thing; it is not faithful; it is not lasting. It is not even very important, not profound and serious in the sense in which love, a mother's love for her child, is profound, irreparable, tragically important. Chère,” he drew Susanna closer, “it is not even as profound as friendship;—it lacks the tenderness and constancy of friendship.— Do you see, dear?” and with a movement of his arm he turned her face to his.

Her starry eyes smiled into his—“Sweet,” her sweetly curled

Love Days

lips uttered, "you're being perfectly sweet, Turro; you're frank, you're nice, you're sweet, you're dear—: thank you."

The blood flushed his face, but a few inches from hers. "I am almost kissing you," he whispered, hesitating.

"I don't care if you do, you're being so nice," and she offered him her face with the slightest of gestures, and received, in turn, Turro's moustache gently on her cheek near her eyes, ticklingly across it, and finally scratchingly very near to her mouth.

Odd things are happening today, were Susanna's thoughts, as this journey across her face occurred and was endured. It doesn't feel like my face. . . . He feels like Cousin James. . . . It's a very smothering day. She withdrew her blushing warm face, wondering why she blushed without having the implied feeling to accompany the blush, and while she unlaced his arm gently and looked absent-mindedly at him who now seemed ardent, she organized her thoughts pleasantly and easily.

"Turro, you are indeed a dear, and I'm truly, truly you know, glad you're my friend. And what you have said is interesting and clever and charmingly said.—But . . . but it shows that you have an uncoördinated nature."

"Eh!" he interjected, quite obviously taken aback, and narrowing his ardent eyes to a sinister line.

"I understand all of a sudden what is the matter with you,—with us. You live your physical sensations in one situation and your spiritual emotions in another, and the two never get a chance to meet, as it were; and it is because the physical isn't attached to the spiritual that it is so ephemeral.—I suppose," she went on gaily, "the majority of people are like you. When they like they don't love, and when they love, they don't like, and so, and so—they have to choose. . . ." Susanna was now swimming serenely enough on the surface of things again, and knowing that it was greatly owing to him that she again felt natural and herself, she gave his hand an affectionate squeeze with both of hers, and held it to her cheek for a moment, saying: "Turro dear, you've been so very sweet, I wish you would go away now not to spoil the impression. I'm not going out any more. I'm going to stay here and think over today—this heavy day, and go to sleep. I simply couldn't stand any more in it! Not even you," she added graciously, smiling at him who looked much less friendly than she had expected.

Susanna Moore's

She rose; he rose too and stood before her. "Bien, ma chère," he said, "je me sauve. Especially since you are again becoming theoretical, and when you are theoretical you are a little too naïve to be quite bearable. And après tout what is to be will be, and what is not to be cannot be made to be."

Susanna said: "I hope it is not as bad as that, because I thought I understood you and in fact every one quite well today, every one and everything! I had thought I was almost clairvoyante today."

"Comment ça?" Turro asked dreamily, leaning against the book shelves.

"Eh bien—" Susanna was tired to death, but she willed to be gracious, and she stood before him telling him in a general way about Françoise. "And then Pierre Delaire came in and—"

"Pierre—he is back? And you tell me that only now, droll girl! The most charming of your friends, with myself as a close second—eh, Suze, yes?"

But Susanna had broken down and was leaning helplessly against a chair, hanging her head, provoked almost to tears, and now weakly removing Turro's ready arm.

"Pauvre Suze," he was saying, "truly I've fatigued you. I'm going, but admit that you have learned something from me, chère?"

"But if I didn't understand you?" She smiled at him warily.

"But one is never quite sure whether you do or not; that is your charm, child or sphinx." He burst into his ready laugh, and it seemed to cover a certain indecision.—But he presently pulled her up from the arm of her chair, and was now ready to go, pleasantly, simply.

And she, deriving strength from this satisfactory impending event, flung at him "I'll tell you then, Turro; I understand every one today excepting one person—myself," and with this flung a dazed and appealing look straight into his eyes.

"What do you wish to say?"

"Anything you wish to understand, Turro mio; it is the way of the sphinx.—Sauvez vous, bonsoir—" She held the door open.

"Je me sauve pour ce soir," he raised her hand, but did not kiss it, "Suzanne adorable, but less mysterious than she thinks," he called airily as he left.

Love Days

The moment Poledo was actually and permanently gone, Susanna noticed that she began to revive.

In a short time, as she lay on her sofa, breathing solitude and peace in long drafts, and knowing that they were delicious and healing, her fatigue fell from her as a heavy garment when unclasped. She no longer even wanted to sleep; she wanted to eat. And after she had ordered Françoise to prepare some tea and sandwiches for her, suddenly she wanted to bathe and dress.

Susanna bathed and dressed. She dressed in her new and favourite tea-gown, a slim trailing thing of gold, embroidered heavily in pearls; again a gown much like a skin, a golden skin. She put coral slippers on her feet, and pearls in her ears, and looked at herself and smiled her approval.

And having eaten her supper, and rouged her lips, she stretched out on the sofa once more, and prepared energetically at last to give herself up to the voluptuousness of undisturbed remembrance.

But, alas,—after a great plunge into the depths of memory, up she came to the surface almost immediately, floating. She dove once more, with the same results. And again and again, obstinately, but in vain!— Was it then so impossible to recapture the past? . . .

Disappointed but defeated, Susanna at length desisted from her dives, and let herself float. And she found herself floating lazily, deliciously held up, as it were, by the atmospheric emanation of all of her actual contact with Grodz; and surrounded by a huge vacuum in which unvisualized events waited to be darted into.

The only thing she could actually see was himself in a general physical way;—his outline, his movement, the feeling of these in his physical nearness; his golden colour, the texture of his skin and hair. But she could not visualize the details, the shapes of his eyes, his nose, his beautiful lips, his ears, his hands—: these, she felt, would deliciously enter into the vacuum soon, and after having been experienced, drop down into the element on which she was so pleasantly floating, add to it, and raise her ever farther up and up—into the yet inexperienced void.

Susanna lay smiling with closed eyes; smiling at her picture, smiling at her memories, and smiling most of all at her anticipations and at her certainty of the immanence of their occurrence.

Susanna Moore's

The telephone rang, and she sprang up. Doubt, painful doubt, and pleasurable excitement lurked in her raised brows and in the lip caught with her teeth, as she flew to the instrument. And here both were suddenly dissipated by Grodz's voice, and Susanna suddenly restored to complete self-possession.

Was she ready for the ball, and might he be presumptuous enough to ask permission to come and see her dressed, and might he come right away because he could not wait another second.

But of course, she replied quite formally, she was flattered by the interest of so great an artist, and he might come to see her, and it was best that he should come at once.

"I am already with you; I have been with you since you left," he vouchsafed.

"I know; I felt your presence," she replied flirtaciously.

"Truly, how altogether charming, how did—"

"Au revoir," she cut him short.

Susanna returned to the sofa with shining eyes; she was filled with a single idea: that she was soon to have his beautiful presence in here, in this room of hers, to play with.

The telephone rang again. Susanna rose again, and approached it with a frown of hostility.

"My angel," came Grodz's voice again, "I don't know the address of Heaven."

"I thought you said you had been with me these last hours, and I thought I said I had known it."

"Exactly, since I am with you I don't know where I am! At what address am I?"

"At this moment you are leaning over the parapet, listening to the sounds of Heaven, the second floor rear Heaven of 88 West Forty-ninth street, thinking how you may enter!" Susanna laughed.

"I shall not think—I shall enter!"

"88 West Forty-ninth street—" Susanna hung up, and laughed. His quick wit pleased her, but it came to her as a surprise: she had thought of him so completely in visual terms.

She gave herself a last survey in the mirror: there was nothing to repair. She looked quite wonderfully to her own taste. Her skin was dazzlingly milky in the electric light, her hair shone like polished copper, her teeth shone, her eyes shone almost black, and her lips rivalled her coral slippers, she thought, amused. Her

Love Days

throat, neck, breast and arms were throbbingly young, and so was the rest of her body through her heavily weighted cloth of gold skin.

Susanna again realized how greatly she had changed since the days of her teens; she had changed almost as much physically as she felt changed in character, and her body, at any rate, had vastly improved. Tonight she had no doubts of her beauty.

She wondered how she looked to Grodz,—how in a general way she impinged on Grodz;—she had no idea. With others it was possible to have at least an idea. To Turro, for instance, she was a soft white dove, with claws; to Bill she was a crystal virgin to be dreamed of and prayed to; to Professor Emery a hard and free and beautiful young Amazon of the intellect; and so forth. But to Grodz? . . .

He was here; the house telephone announced him.

Susanna called to Françoise to admit him and went in to the library at once to receive him. Here she leaned against her green wall much as she had leaned against his door, though with a very different expression: a gay, amused, amiable, blind, expression that both greeted and held off.

He entered springily, with "How nice of you to have let me come and disturb you . . ." and more of the kind.

She allowed him to kiss her hand formally, and waved him to a chair, saying: "It's ever so nice to see you here in my 'ciel particulier.'"

He threw her a sharp glance, which, however, rebounded from her blandness, as it were, and devoted itself to an investigation of her room.

"And what a 'ciel particulier'!" he cried. "What a charming room!" and he darted about, touching a thing here and there, remarking on its quality and origin, full of alertness and enthusiasm.

Susanna, seated in her bergère, and wondering whether anybody else in the world could look picturesque and just right in a tight-to-the-body black suit and blue shirt (from which his golden head rose like a flame), threw in a word or two in dissent or corroboration.

But suddenly he was before her, devouring her with sharp eyes. "What are you and who are you, that came to me as an angel,

Susanna Moore's

and live like a beautiful nymph in a green silk cave filled with books instead of pearls and call it your 'ciel particulier.' I am completely at a loss; you have quite turned my head—" He waited, rigid, for her answer.

"But I've only called it my Heaven to you because you called me your angel. Otherwise it's my study, and I'm a simple Greek scholar."

"A Greek scholar!" and had Susanna been in a noticing mood, she might have learned how a man looked when completely mystified, and more than a little upset, and trying vainly to conceal this state of mind. "A Greek scholar," he repeated. "It is as though I met the Venus of Botticelli on her shell, in person, in a New York apartment, and I asked her to tell me how she is possible, and she says: 'I am a Greek scholar, and that is why I am a beautiful child and live in a silk cave and wear golden draperies and coral slippers.'" He knelt before her, grabbing her hand and shouting, "Mon Dieu, mon Dieu, what then does that mean! Tell me, tell me; speak to me!" (He emphasized the "mon" in "mon Dieu" as though it were "grand" in "grand Dieu.")

"Sit down, or I shan't tell you anything."

He jumped up from his knee, pulled a chair to hers, and sat on its edge, erect, as though he expected to spring into space in another moment. "You see," he rippled, "I do whatever you tell me, even when I don't want to! I am already the slave of the Greek scholar. . . ."

He said this so oddly, and pronounced Greek scholar so funnily,—almost spitting it out of his mouth, Susanna thought, that she burst into a laugh, which, though it emanated from a sea-green nymph, a golden Venus and a Greek scholar, emanated from an inwardly excited one, who had given her sense of humour an evening off, and on its reappearance in response to his, was taken off her guard.

The laugh accordingly developed into peal upon peal of copery laughter, if the tone of greater vibrancy than silver may thus be described, and which, had they not emanated from a Venus and nymph might have been summed up as an attack of the giggles.

And Grodz, treated to the spectacle of his angel extended on her chair in a state of complete abandon, with head thrown back and curls and shoulders shaking, and given up to waves of un-

Love Days

controlled laughter, Grodz was constrained to laugh himself, as is the spectator of genuine giggles; but below this infection he was not amused, but increasingly perplexed and excited.

And as Susanna was quite manifestly incapable of hearing anything at all, and he equally incapable of remaining passive, he kneeled down before her again, and putting his arms about her shoulders to quiet them, he shouted, laughing a little: "Finish, finish, or I will think you are laughing at me!"

Susanna "finished" more quickly under the necessity of removing his arm than would have seemed within the limits of the possible.

"Oh", she gasped, "truly I don't know what I am laughing at . . . I can't imagine . . . but it's very difficult to stop. You must forgive me."

"It was the Greek sch—" he began.

"Hush," Susanna gasped, and placed the tips of her fingers on his mouth, for which a gesture of a few inches only was needed. "Don't begin again, or I shall. . . . Hush. . . ."

He retained her fingers and kissed them slowly, one by one, staring fixedly into Susanna's eyes, while she, feeling strangely intimate with this stranger before whom she had laughed without constraint, and strangely tolerant, let him do his tricks, and again found the sensation of his firm lips and the movement of his fluid and quick gestures not unpleasant, while she found the view of his bowed head and upturned eyes and shimmering golden hair and deep golden skin and finely moulded jaw and slim hard column of throat—well, simply inexhaustibly entrancing. There was a delicious mixture of fierce youth and maturity of will about him, she thought,—even physically. . . .

"I want to wipe the tears from your cheeks, even though they are only tears of laughter; I want to kiss them away!" he announced in his hard choppy final manner that she found so amusing and bewitching. "Let me!" His face was close upon hers; wild and rigid admiration was registered on it.

"No," she gently shoved his head away with her slim firm hands;—his hair felt crisp and hard, just as it looked, felt glittering too, Susanna enthusiastically thought; "Greek scholars don't do things like that even if great painters propose them."

He accepted the rebuke. "But, *mon Dieu*," he cried, "what does then in America a young and beautiful Greek scholar do,

Susanna Moore's

parole! The Greeks are dead, and they have left behind for posterity the greatest art, the only great sculpture the world has ever produced, and philosophy, and literature! Don Dieu, what else is needed! They live in these, forever! But to dig about in their language, their ruins, their *que sais-je*,—what an idea! I believe I must be mad when the most beautiful woman, all in all, that I have seen in America tells me she is a Greek scholar! *Qu'est ce que tout ça veut dire, mon Dieu!*"

He was now seated on the edge of a chair again, and without waiting for elucidation, he continued: "If you want to know about the Greeks, my beautiful child, I will tell you, for it is I who understand them and their great art, the only great art: I am the only one who does understand them! There are many beautiful things I can tell you, many beautiful and true ones; I can open your eyes and your mind to many beauties, real beauties, real realities,—not the dead stuff in all these books! And I am myself not only a spiritual descendant of Greece, but on my Mother's side a Greek. Ask me what you want to know, ask me anything! . . . What a pretty foot she has, this mysterious child, how it ends in a little curling movement,—tapers into a curl," he slid his finger along her foot delicately, "and the rest—the arm—the hand—the shoulders—enfin all—all! What a girl! . . ."

During this inventory of her perfections, while his appraising objective glances travelled over her, Susanna sat regarding him calmly, with smiling lips and reflecting eyes, her head tilted to one side. Their appraising glances met;—Susanna broke into a little laugh. "You are not bad-looking yourself, you know, as I told you this afternoon; you are—"

"Eh bien," he threw in, "if you find me not too bad, be nice to me!" Another rigid stare right into her eyes.

"But I'm being nice to you," Susanna tossed at him, "extraordinarily nice! I called on you without an invitation; I liked you without—without knowing you," she laughed. "I'm receiving you on the same evening without—"

"Without what, enfin,—without a chaperon?" He laughed tentatively.

"Without ceremony was the end of the sentence. Greek scholars don't have chaperons; they don't need them. So how could I possibly be nicer to you—?"

Love Days

"*Without*," he laughed excitedly, "without being really nice. I understand. Eh bien, don't go to the ball. Let me stay here with you."

"Oh I'm not going to the ball; I changed my mind."

"Tiens, it was arranged with—what is his name—Poledo. You changed your mind,—when? Are you not dressed for it?"

"This? It's my tea-gown, my favourite.— Oh, I decided about an hour or two ago, when Poledo left."

"Poledo left only an hour or two ago—tiens, tiens. And what did he do all that time here, I should like to know. . . ." He eyed her suspiciously.

Susanna seemed not to notice. "We talked of love."

"You talked of love!" he shouted, and then was silent. "Eh bien, it might have been worse . . . Mon Dieu, I should like to know what *ce type là* could tell you of love that is interesting. Beau garçon, aimable, nature a s'amouracher. . . . No doubt he is infatuated with you. But love—!"

"On the contrary, he declared that love is less than friendship—" Susanna dimpled—"and that his feeling for me is pure friendship,—so there!"

Grodz jumped up and kneeled at her side again; not because he wished to kneel but because it was the position closest to her within the bounds of propriety, if not of custom.

"And do you believe that nonsense, that hypocrisy, *mon enfant*; or are you fooling me? Je me demande. . . ." he interpolated suspiciously. "Is it possible that you do not know that friendship is the pale moon,—an ornament in the sky; icy, dead, beautiful enough when the sun, which is love, has disappeared;—put out like this," he snapped his fingers, "when the sun returns! And it is I who tell you that friendship, like the moon, is useless, unreal, without function; and love, like the sun, necessary, warm, nourishing, fructifying, necessary; necessary for beauty and for growth, do you understand?"

Susanna understood—she thought she understood—more than his words: she thought she understood his spirit through his words. And not only through his words—for she felt his whole physical self as a marvellous transparency for his spirit. She was acutely sensible of him as he kneeled before her, erect, without a trace of self-consciousness, his eyes sharp, green, and spark-

152

Susanna Moore's

ling, his golden hair sparkling,—every gesture decided, finished, without hesitation: a body and a personality moving together at every moment. He was indeed a flame, a golden flame . . .

And there was something about all this, she thought, that was not quite play, but yet partook of the æsthetic charm of play; and she was quite moved as she bowed her head in assent and said sweetly: "Yes, I understand your views, your view; and I like your picture. It is the second time today that we have symbolized things by the solar system." She smiled reminiscently.

"We," he snapped, "who—we? Encore ce type, ce Poledo?"

"No, I think not. No—Delaire—the painter. You must know him, or of him,—he is a dear friend. . . . We decided—oh, it's a complicated thought—I don't feel like talking; I've talked so much today,—it is you who must—"

"You do not feel like talking—? I hope it is not that you do not like talking to me—" He grabbed her hand as appealingly as he could, and his eyes, so close to hers, they too appealed, although, beneath the appeal, they too tried to grab his desire from her. "Do you know," he pursued with undiminished intensity, "I should be unhappy, but truly unhappy, if you did not like talking with me, because I feel so happy in your presence, your witty and intelligent and beautiful presence, as I have not felt in a long time—perhaps never—I believe never!"

Susanna's enthusiasm was steadily growing. He was marvelous, he was unlike any man she had ever known, unlike anyone at all; more finished, more unified, more whole, more perfect. His beauty had no ups and downs, no seasons; every gesture he made was harmonious and final. Even his closeness was pleasant, for his body was fresh and firm and somehow incorporeal. . . . His flesh was like marble or majolica or something more unchanging and incorruptible than flesh. He was beautiful, and he charmed her senses,—her senses, and her sense of beauty.

She smiled at him with shining eyes. "I know why I don't feel like talking. I feel as I do at a concert or in a museum, or some place like that, where one does not feel the need of expression, but receives only,—impressions, sensations, emotions." Susanna's eyes began to wander from him to the ceiling. "Thus I am receiving you into my spirit, quite simply, as though you were one of your own works, or a strain of music . . . I shall

Love Days

begin to think of you only when you echo in my soul . . . when the actual contact is removed . . . when you are gone. . . .”

Grodz's expression, while he took this speech in, was again complex, but he cried simply enough: "You are as subtle as you are beautiful, do you know that! And do you know that you will turn my head?— Do you know," he went on in more subdued tones, "that I am quite alone in New York . . . since eight months! Since I am here I have had no real friends . . . no real sympathy . . . no joy. I have worked, worked, harder than ever in my life; and I have been more lonely, completely alone, with no one at all by my side to share my impressions . . . all the new experience that enters my spirit— And in the midst of my loneliness you drop from Heaven with your beautiful head that contains wit and intelligence, and in a golden skin that reveals nothing but loveliness, and you tell me that you feel related to my work, and that you receive me into your spirit—do you know that you have turned my head completely?— I am in love with you—: Receive me into your heart as well."

He did not touch her, but his eyes blazed into hers, and his whole body seemed on fire with ardour.

Susanna was touched by the suggestion of his intellectual loneliness, and charmed by the literary flavour of his expression, and more than all this, entranced by his beauty, so that, instead of terminating the situation, she compromised: "But the way to my heart is longer than that to my spirit." She lifted her eyebrows and looked truly distant. "I am told that I have more spirit than heart."

"You are told, you are told!" he shouted. "By whom? By those impotent to find your heart and the entrance to it! But I shall find it—love will guide me—for I am in love with you— Do you understand well what I avow: that I am in love, madly in love with you?— Or do you not understand?"

This last question was prompted by Susanna's continued calm under this amorous fusillade, a calm that might well have perplexed a more subtle spirit than Grodz's.

"Well, at any rate—" Susanna finally gathered herself up, and bending her head graciously to his, placed her hand on his crisp golden waves that tingled so pleasantly, and smiling deliciously with dazed eyes, cooed in her most contralto tones,

Susanna Moore's

"at any rate, I hope you are. I think I shall like you to be in love with me."

Their faces were but a few inches apart. "Let me kiss you then," he pleaded, tragic with intensity.

"Not yet," she answered, but she was sensibly affected by his emotion;—her eyes deepened, her heart beat faster, her breath quickened with excitement as, fascinated, she watched his face, now more than ever like a tragic mask, immobile but for the blazing eyes and the beautiful lips that hardly moved to murmur: "Just once, pour l'amour de Dieu!"

And as one dies, when struck by lightning, before becoming conscious of it, so Susanna, before she was aware that she had willed it, gave him her lips to kiss.

And he by a single gesture, due to miraculous agility, or practice,—he, whose head before had been on a level with hers, managed in the moment of approach to receive her in his arms and cushion there her turned-back head, so that the embrace of their lips radiated into the surrounding regions of arms, shoulders and breast, and became an embrace, crushing, violent, yet physically light.

Susanna lay back in his arms and enjoyed the experience. It came to her as a sweet and exciting sensation surrounded with an aura of thought-consciousness, which, if condensed, would have formed approximately this: This is a marvellously pleasant kiss, the first kiss of my life which is to my taste. It is in perfect harmony with himself, his movement, his rhythm; it has the same quality of finish and definiteness; there are no ragged edges; it is a work of art, like his painting.

"You kiss beautifully," she murmured, as he freed her, her eyes shining with admiration.

"Eh!" he ejaculated, reduced for the moment to speechlessness; taken aback even physically, as it were, by the spectacle of Susanna poured out once more in her chair—as they say in some language—like a golden rivulet, and smiling up at him with the approving enthusiasm of a connoisseur.

"You are extraordinary," she added, in the same tone in which she had praised his work.

"And you!" he burst out, "—it is you who are extraordinary, *ma parole!*" His eyes blazed with a gleam of fury. "Are you

Love Days

then so experienced in kisses that you appraise them! Perhaps you have marks for them, a, b, c!" he shouted. "Who are you then, who look young and innocent, and live in a green silk room, and make experiments with kisses! What am I—" He paused; there was coming into Susanna's face a certain look of childlike dazed surprise and an unchildlike frown. Controlling and subduing himself, he continued: "It is because I am madly jealous—I cannot bear the thought that—that others have kissed you— You should not have told me, if it is true—and you should not have pretended, if it is not— I cannot endure the thought—it drives me mad—You make me miserable—"

"But," Susanna straightened up and looked at him with some perplexity, "mon cher, I pretend nothing, and I said nothing—and you have no reason to be jealous," she added, for his beautiful face was tragic with pain, and she felt herself to be, though inexplicably, the cause of it.

"They do not embrace you then . . . all those friends . . . those moons? . . . You do not know I—kisses? Say no, say no," he pleaded, looking, Susanna thought, so—so irresistible that she was tempted to answer him with a kiss of her own on his compressed lips.

But she pulled herself back to the heavier reality. "Not often," she said gently; "and never as you did, never beautifully, never to my liking. . . ."

But Grodz had dropped his head on his arm, murmuring: "encore, encore." It was the first gesture of frustration, the first suggestion of frustration he had given, and seeing him suddenly overcome by despair like this, Susanna was profoundly, unbearably touched. He suddenly seemed a boy, a golden boy, suffering . . .

"Pol," she whispered, "be reasonable, since I tell you that yours is the first kiss that I have loved, and since I will tell you something more—: I have never kissed any man of all the dozens who have wanted me to."

"You call me Pol; you touch me profoundly; and you say 'dozens' who wanted to— mon Dieu, what does that again mean!"

"But," she meant to calm him, "what do you find unusual about it? You know how men are, and you say that I am beautiful and charming, and I'm very nice from a worldly point of view,

156

Susanna Moore's

you know; quite valuable and all that, so that it is not only myself that men want, but, so to say, the idea of myself,—do you see?" She laughed.

He did not see what she intended him to see, but he knew that he did not, so he kept quiet, and fixed her with his tragic stare. She continued: "But all this is of no importance to us. The important thing is that I let you kiss me, and liked it, because—because it was yours," she cooed, "and because you are delightful to me, and I'm very glad you're a little in love with me, and I feel that someday I shall perhaps kiss you . . ." She smiled at him divinely with worlds of futurity in her eyes.

His charged rigidity snapped, or more accurately, exploded, and seizing her hands he cried: "A little,—someday,—perhaps! Let us finish all this! If you are glad I'm in love, let me try to make you love me! Give me my chance!"

"But you have made a beginning—"

"Beginning, beginning," he murmured, "but do you not understand that to love one must see one another continually—one must experience together, suffer, and be happy—I must see you all the time, I must have you by my side all the time!—It is this that love is: the desire to have the loved one near one always, always—Suzanne, mon ange, come away with me; let us go to the country together—" He paused,—Susanna's frown of perplexity was reappearing. "We can make up a party—take a chaperon, two, three; anything you like;—but let me stay with you, and make you like me a little. Do you not understand that being away from you will be torture—I shall be tortured by the thought of your hair and your childish mouth, and your eyes that are bruised stars, and—and all of you—and your wit and your saying that you feel related to my spirit, and receive me into yours—" He was again working himself into a frenzy and trying to embrace her. "Come with me—"

The telephone bell jangled.

Grodz jumped up; Susanna remained seated. "It's nothing; it's the automobile; it can wait," she said dreamily.

"What automobile?"

"Mine—ours."

"How—what for—the automobile?"

"To take me home."

Love Days

"Home? Comment, this is not your home—you do not live here?"

"No, this is my study—the Greek scholar's study," she laughed. "I live with my aunt . . . Mrs. Cathay. We live in a hideous, bourgeois—why is he ringing again?"

Susanna rose and crossed to the instrument.

"Well, Faragut?—She is?—Then, perhaps you had better drive Mrs. Cathay home and return here. I shan't be ready for at least ten minutes." She hung up.

"My aunt's in the car." She stood before him, smiling and gracious. "But it will be right back, and I shall have to change to my street things, so we shall have to say goodnight and good-bye, for a little while."

"You are cruel," he said, staring at her intently, but also inquiringly. "You are cruel," he repeated a little mechanically.

"Oh, don't say that, you who have given me so much pleasure today—you who have stamped today with yourself and your art, and have made it beautiful; you, whom I have received into my spirit,—oh, don't say that; say something—sweet, that I shall remember—"

She offered him her hands with smiling eyes and lips. On fire, he gathered her up in his arms, and there followed another embrace that Susanna thought marvellously compounded of passion and delicacy,—an embrace that seemingly absorbed her into himself, and yet left her whole. . . .

"You intoxicate me," he murmured, his cheek to hers, his breath on her, his lips about to play with hers again, "the perfume of—"

"Pol," Susanna interrupted, a little pale, "it would be too wonderful if I were to fall in love with you,—if I were in love with you—"

"I will make you," he said and gathered her still closer in his arms.

"Yes, make me—"

He saw her white face, with its closed eyes and black lashes on the cheeks and lips reddened by his kisses, bent back on its slim stem and offering itself to him blindly, and he thought it was the mask of passion and lost his head—"Suzanne, je suis fou—"

The telephone jangled. They were immobilized. And Susanna slowly released herself from him and walked to it as in a dream.

"Madame who?" she asked.

Susanna Moore's

"Madame Cathay is on her way up," she announced mechanically to Grodz, who had gone to the window and pulled it open. "My aunt is on her way up—she must have been waiting—"

"Tant pis," he said, and lapsed into silence.

Susanna held the door open, as her aunt issued from the elevator.

"I thought I'd wait for you, as long as you were to be a few minutes only. I did not wish to send Faragut back again; I've had him out so much today. The ten minutes are passed, so I thought you would now be ready. . . ." And Mrs. Cathay stood still at the door as though she expected Susanna to be ready to leave at once in spite of the tea-gown, on which she bestowed only an absent-minded glance. Now, however, she saw Grodz, who was advancing from the window, and she entered the room.

"You see, Aunt, I am enjoying a visit from M. Pol Grodz—. My aunt, Mrs. Cathay—. And I thought of course that you had driven home, or I should not have kept you waiting. I'm sorry." Susanna felt dazed, as though she had awakened from a wonderful and dangerous dream to an odd and unpleasant reality that had the power, the fantastic power, of preventing the dream from becoming a reality.— Visits of this sudden nature from her aunt were rare even during the day and were, as far as she could remember, non-occurring in the evening.

She looked absently at the others. Grodz was being extremely polite to Mrs. Cathay, vivaciously complimenting her on her niece, her niece's taste, her niece's furniture, antiques, works of art; her niece's scholarship and library. Mrs. Cathay was accepting the compliments amiably, without visible comment or surprise, so pleased was she, as a matter of fact, to speak in French, that what was said in French was of comparatively slight importance.

Susanna, seeing her young sun-god arranging a chair for Mrs. Cathay with immense gallantry, while thus entertaining her in the manner of one elderly person with another, was further restored to earth, and calling "I shall be ready in five minutes," blew Pol a kiss invisible to the being held responsible for her merits, and disappeared into her dressing-room.

Her private breathing space, out of the sphere of subjection to his inflation, did her good; immediately it began to restore her

Love Days

clearness of vision, self-control and sense of reality. It even dissipated a little the dreamlike quality of her encounter with him by giving back to herself the reality that she needed in order to make of it, too, a reality. For she was going to make it a reality:—she was going to direct it into the channels of reality, she assured herself.

She felt glad now of her aunt's intrusion. It had destroyed a moment of beauty, heavy beauty; but it had destroyed, too, that too unreal quality the situation was assuming . . . Like the overture of an opera that anticipates all that the following acts should reveal, and reveals it all irrationally. . . .

Susanna smiled as she heard Pol's voice waxing and waning, but chiefly waxing, and occasionally eliciting lengthy monotonous French replies from her aunt. How, she wondered, did he really react to her so-different-from-herself aunt, whose appearance alone was so grotesquely incongruous with the green silk cave,—as he had so charmingly put it. As always, Mrs. Cathay was gowned in severe black, almost high in the neck, without any relief but that afforded by a magnificent string of pearls; her hair was perfectly, stiffly and severely dressed, and even her sables were, or seemed, less soft and caressing—more ceremonious—than one would have supposed it was in the nature of sables to be able to seem or be. She was now, in a word, the picture of patrician opulence, solidity, and conservatism.

And as Susanna heard the hum of Pol's energetic, choppy and a little strident cadences, she thought warmly, with a catch in the beating of her heart: what a dear he is, what pains he is taking with Auntie; and that he should do so seemed to her a little as though the lion of the jungle should force himself to the doing of parlour tricks,—a pathetic, touching performance that nevertheless one would somehow prefer to miss.

Buttoning her skirt she approached the door, and lending an ear, heard: "I assure you, Madame, yours are the most beautiful pearls in the world! Of a lustre incredibly fine, and perfect in colour and match." He went into detail. "You may believe me, and rest assured, for I understand the subject. I am an artist, and I have seen many pearls. Par conséquent I affirm, Madame, that it is a great æsthetic delight, a privilege, to see so perfect a chain; as it their privilege to be seen in so distinguished and elegant a frame."

Susanna Moore's

Susanna laughed loud. How deliciously naïve he was to suppose that her aunt, who had had these pearls collected for years and was quite a connoisseur, knew less about them than he did. How like an artist; how boyish! And she liked and yet did not like him to be boyish.

Hatted, coated, and drawing on her gloves she re-entered the study.

"Enfin, enfin!" he cried. "That is to say, I really mean déjà, déjà, since Mme. Caté and myself have been having a delightful conversation which has convinced me that Mme. Caté speaks French twice as well as I do."

"I am afraid you are a flatterer, M. Grodz. But I ought to speak French. I spent three years in a French convent when a girl, and since then—" and so forth.

Pol was darting glances at Susanna who went about the room arranging various things and extinguishing the lights.

"Auntie dear," she interrupted her, "please step out into the hall, so that I can turn out the remaining lights."

Mrs. Cathay stepped out, Grodz with her, who, after pushing the button for the lift, ran back into the study with "I must help Mlle. Suzanne."

Susanna had turned off the last light as he arrived by her side.

"Adorable angel, you are again as you were when I first saw you," he whispered hurriedly, "tell me quickly that you love me a little,—just a little!" He was so near to her that his breath was on her, but he did not touch her.

"As much as this, my beautiful genius, who are going to make me love you," she whispered and put her arms around his neck and her lips to his, feeling the thrill of sudden ownership of a rare and beautiful object.

They had joined Mrs. Cathay in less than half a minute.

"Does Françoise not lock up after you?" she asked as they descended in the lift.

"I sent her to bed, poor thing, she was tired. She leads such a dull and busy life."

Susanna and Grodz were looking at one another. Susanna was shining with ardour, Grodz was again tragic with intensity.

Mrs. Cathay was shaking her head over Susanna's views. "What kind of a life would you have her lead, my dear?"

Love Days

"A pleasantly adventuresome, unforeseeable, exciting life, full of charming extraordinary happenings," Susanna, replied, smiling into Grodz's eyes, and then laughing. "Here we are at the parting of the ways."

"May we drive you anywhere?" Mrs. Cathay asked.

"Thank you a thousand times, Madame," Pol broke his silence, "I shall walk up the few blocks to my studio where I have something to arrange. I hope soon to have the honour of calling upon you and presenting my homage to you and to Mademoiselle, and I count without fail on receiving a telephone call at my studio from Mademoiselle very soon—" He shot his number twice at Susanna distinctly and emphatically as he tucked the lap robe over them with "empressement" and kissed Mrs. Cathay's hand.

As they drove away Susanna saw him standing in the light of the lamp, erect, galvanic, golden hair glittering, lips compressed, eyes keenly searching in her direction. Heavens, but he is beautiful, she thought; and is seemed to her that she would never be able to exhaust his beauty, except as one exhausts the scent of some perfume, temporarily, by fatiguing one's senses.

"He's quite handsome, and very clever," Mrs. Cathay remarked. "He tells me that his father was Finnish and his mother a Greek. What an unusual combination! But he suggests a Greek statue, don't you think?"

"No— Perhaps— Yes, I suppose so," Susanna, who did not feel like discussing Pol with her aunt, agreed verbally. But she too thought that his was a strange and interesting ancestry. However, what difference did it make of what races he was compounded in view of the fact that he was a great artist, and was beautiful with the rare and fine beauty of a work of art rather than an object of nature. . . .

Upon her arrival home, Susanna kissed her aunt goodnight at once and flew to her room. She hurried out of her clothes and into her gown and slippers, and flung herself on her bed.— She would wait five minutes more to make sure that he had reached his studio.—She closed her eyes and filled the moments with pictures of him,—seated, walking, turning, standing, kneeling, embracing, kissing;—and all her pictures carried the suggestion of

Susanna Moore's

some beautiful object: a spinning golden top,—a golden flame,—a shooting star—

And this radiant creature had fallen in love with her. Suddenly, completely, definitely, surely, as was his way.— And at last *she* was falling in love.— With him.— Slowly, consciously, increasingly, as was her way.— She was luxuriously sinking into love, as it were,—so it seemed. For he had kissed her and she had not merely endured it; she had enjoyed it; and she had given to him her first kiss given for the mere pleasure of kissing.

She took the receiver from the hook, and closed her eyes and asked for his number.

"Allo, allo," his quick choppy words came.

"C'est moi, et c'est bientôt, je suppose!"

"Angel," he cried; "I am here thinking of you, waiting for you, but I hardly dared expect—How sweet you are! I am profoundly touched! And your aunt, what a charming woman! It is what I admire beyond all,—her dignity, distinction—" He broke off. "What are you doing, *ma belle enfant*—?"

Susanna, a little dazed, replied: "Telephoning to you to wish you goodnight.— Goodnight and *Au Revoir*!"

"Attendez, attendez—do not be cruel, do not laugh at me! You know I cannot have a good night—you know that I shall be unhappy, that I shall suffer tortures, when silence falls and leaves me alone here without you. It is I who will spend the night here, thinking of you, of your beauty and charm that I have held in my arms only for a moment—: it is I who will suffer atrociously. *Suzanne adorée*, let me telephone to you again, once more, during the night."

"But it is impossible," she answered. "It would awaken the household."

"True, true; I am an ungrateful one: you have done enough, you have brought to my heart a little of the Heaven you fell from. It is only the fear of separation, the fear of expulsion, that makes me sleepless and unhappy! *Suzanne adorée*, say you love me a little!"

"I'll say it next time I telephone, if you promise to think of nothing in between but of me."

"Next time, always next time,—and when will that be?"

Love Days

"At two o'clock, in the middle of the mysterious night, as the clock strikes."

"Angel, adorable angel," he cried, "what would I not give to be with you at this moment."

"You will be with me again at two o'clock, mon charmant Pol."

Susanna hung up the receiver, and prepared for bed. She was vaguely disappointed; telephoning was a most unsatisfactory mode of intercourse with almost every one. She would telephone at two o'clock because she promised to, and then no more. After that she would see him . . . they might lunch together tomorrow, possibly in the country, and the day after they might dine—but no, she was dining at Marion's. She might take him there with her. No, she would not take him there, nor anywhere; she wanted him for herself.

Susanna opened the window. The moon he had meant to malign was shining with a soft, suffused, and gentle silver glow; warmly, intimately, soothingly. . . .

She went to bed. She felt that she would not sleep. . . . Awake, she would dream of him, and at two o'clock he would shoot into her dreams, sharp with reality, but suffusing life into new dreams of him. . . . What a wonderful night. . . .

She fell asleep almost at once, and while she slept the clock struck twelve and one and two and three and four and five and six and seven and eight and nine.

A SUNBEAM crept in at the edge of the closed jalousies and shutters of their bedroom window.

Perhaps it was this messenger of the approaching maturity of the summer day that awakened Susanna. She awakened, contrary to her habit, from the chaos of sleep, as Pallas Athene is said to have sprung from her father's head: in the fullness of her powers.

The room was sweet-scented and of a cool warmth and, in spite of the dancing shaft of light that had penetrated its seals, grateful with the shades of dawn. It was a charming room in the Italian style, high and spacious and parquettèd, and because of its great size it appeared to be pleasantly empty despite its copious Empire furnishings and the antique adornments that had been added by its present occupants.

Susanna glanced about her before she glanced at her sleeping husband. Two weeks ago, when they had first arrived at Capri in the course of their honeymoon, the order of procedure was reversed. But now she was physically accustomed to his presence; she knew he was there, because he was there every morning; seeing him added nothing of certainty—: his presence had shrunk to a matter of fact.

She glanced, and her glance lingered. He lay with an arm thrown above his head, framing in an unachieved oval his profile against her amber silk pillows. In sleep his body was relaxed as it never was in waking hours, and yet, even relaxed, he gave the sense of compression and tension. It occurred to Susanna, whose admiring gaze, trying to melt into him, continually glanced off him as from a smooth and slippery surface, that in sleep even his body was definite and clear and sharp like an etching, and that it separated itself in some unreal way from its surroundings.

Others, she reflected, as she propped herself on her elbow to stare at him, others were to some extent enveloped in some sort of vaporous, more distended and dissolved continuation of themselves,—in some misty spiritual emanation, as it were, that became apparent in their going forth, even in silence and in sleep,

Love Days

in vaguely felt personal forces. Not so he:—he spent none of himself in cloudy atmosphere; he kept himself all compact; he communicated himself definitely; in words, in gestures, in acts. One ceased to feel him in silence; and sleep was silent.

She continued to scrutinize him, as one scrutinizes a work of art,—disinterestedly, admiringly. Her glance wandered over him coolly. On its way it touched his extraordinary golden hair:—she had called it hyacinthine in the confusion of her first enthusiasm, but it was nothing of the kind, she had found, it was quite simply exactly like the miniature ripples of a lake near shore,—tight, crisp, compact, like himself, miraculously regular. And it struck her divertingly that he, like Samson, might be shorn of his power, if she, Delilah-like, were to shear him . . . Of his power to please— Her glance touched his cheek and jaw and mouth that were moulded as though cast in polished metal, golden metal; it touched his round throat that placed his head so proudly on his straight shoulders and back; and it touched the closed lids of those eyes she had never loved and that had remained what they were, colourless and sharp, and at times lit with a fanatic fire that scintillated cold passion.

But, all in all, he was beautiful, she thought; beautiful and pleasant . . . pleasant to the touch of the eye and pleasant to the touch of the skin and the muscles. Indeed, at this very moment she wanted badly to draw her finger along the line of his profile. . . . And yet, even more than this she wanted something else—something conflicting: she wanted not to wake him; not to get this day begun; not to get it begun; not to get it begun at all. . . .

Susanna was startled. For an instance, fleetingly, she realized more or less sharply the nature of the mood that had insinuated itself and was growing within her; she realized her astonishing desire to abort the coming of another lazy lovely day on the lovely beach with her beautiful husband: the fifteenth lovely day. And in another moment, as she stared the naked feeling of boredom in the face, she was stunned and bewildered.— It was as though suddenly without warning or apparent cause some object of beauty, some firm and age-defying object, had begun to crumble.

She had instinctively jumped out of bed—she was unconscious

Susanna Moore's

of any intention to stave off the threatening growth to clearness of her unhappy intimations. And finding herself arrested in the centre of the room, aimlessly, yet poised for further movement, she aimlessly walked on to the window. She walked softly and silently in order not to disturb him, and pulling in the heavy shades and blinds she inserted herself between them and the iron grill that served as window sill.

Immediately the pale golden sun-dust poured over her and covered her, covered her as it covered the olive orchard below the house, as it covered the shining rocks and glittering sand of the beach but a few hundred feet away, and the golden blue water of this little rock-enclosed bay, and the wide expanse of calm sea beyond, and in the distance far to the left, the golden brown blur that was Italian mainland.

Susanna's eyes stared into the limitless golden spaces of air and blinked and watered, and her throat contracted in pain; she felt half strangled. Because of too much light, but also because of too much beauty . . . Yes, this beauty was too great; it pained, it pained frightfully; and pain weakened. . . . And yet, had she not witnessed and received this beauty into her spirit day after day—every day since she was here,—and it had not hurt as it did now;—how was this?

No answering flash of the imagination informed her, and she leaned back against the casement, and drew long breaths of the golden morning air, and took long looks at the golden morning beauty: and after a time it hurt less, and she tried to reflect.

In him in there, in Pol, the emotion aroused by beauty translated itself into an impulse to create,—and he created. But, for her—what had been for her the channel of liberation that now was clogged,—in what outgoing force had her emotion poured itself and eventuated, she wondered? . . . But she wondered in vain; she could not think it through; she was baffled. She knew only that today, for the first time, her emotion rolled back heavily on herself and produced this poignant ache in her breast. Thus, she thought, might a pitcher feel if more liquid were poured into it than it could hold.

For a brief moment Susanna smiled at her image, and then she set herself unsmilingly to contemplate this beautiful day and to

Love Days

picture the individual form it would take for her; for them;—unsmilingly, and a little terrified.

It occurred to her that she might be ill. She remembered that her married friends had sometimes complained of indispositions that had struck her as vague and queer. But she felt marvelously fit; physically quite perfect; a contiguous portion of her physical envelopment, as it were; so pleasantly warm, so light, so blue and golden in lightness did her body feel. . . .

Susanna sighed; how she disliked these self-examinations; how they bored her; how bored she was. . . .

She leaned over the grill and it now occurred to her that to the olive trees and to the poppies below she must look very like the Blessed Damozel. Her copper hair hung upon her white shoulders in heavy burnished curls—she had let it grow to please him, her friend in there on the bed,—and she wore a nightgown of pale amber chiffon that revealed her milk-white body bathed in the pale amber light of the sun. Her lids were lowered against the light and her nostrils dilated and her mouth was red and ripe, puckered out in the concentration of her mood. She was less plastic, changing, brilliant than before; heavier and more luscious. Her spirit looked out from her body less nakedly; it was too completely clothed—a little smothered—in physical beauty.

She smiled naïvely. She might still resemble the Blessed Damozel outwardly, yet she was no longer the blessed damozel that she had been: she was married; married; legally married; and really married. How odd then, to feel so unmarried . . . so unmated . . . so lonely . . . so almost—so spiritually—virgin.

There was a vacuum in Susanna's consciousness, as though, fearing a dangerous flood of ideas, she had turned them all off . . . Until it suddenly occurred to her to dwell in imagination on how she would at this moment feel but for him,—but for her companion sleeping on her pillow; were he, that was to say, still in New York, just one pleasant and diverting friend among many, and were she here alone. Alone, or, at least, without a lover, a husband.

She leaned her head against the casement, and closed her eyes and gave herself up to this strangely seductive situation, gradually sinking into it. And having sunk down into the very depths of unreality, and having there arrived at blotting him out,—him, and their inseparableness—she began to experience a delicious

Susanna Moore's

lifting up. . . . First, what seemed like a lifting up from under the burden of dependence on another, . . . succeeded by liberation from the shackles of inevitability, . . . and followed finally by the restoration of the freedom of disposing of herself— And arrived in her ascension at these spheres of lightness and liberty she dimly envisaged the prospect of the restoration of something even greater and more liberating than independence: namely, outlook and future.

Yes, that was it— Here she had arrived at the apex of liberation; had broken through the crushing cramping suffocating finality of her married situation into the kind of free present that stretches into a free future . . . Yes, in her vision the future had been restored to her— And, strangely, in this unreal vision of her independent self she tasted a flavour of reality that was poignantly wanting in her actual situation. . . . Yes, she had hit on the very core of what ailed it; on its strange and dreadful finality; a finality that had somehow divested itself of its normally heavy and serious qualities, and had combined with froth and lightness; a perverse finality that gave to the situation it flavoured the smallness and deadness of unreality. And it seemed to her in retrospect that every other present she had ever lived through had perceptibly carried some other real stage of life in its womb; whereas this present seemed to shape nothing not limited to itself, to bear no seed for future fruition. . . .

Susanna's brow, clouded in pragmatic thought, cleared for a moment, and she smiled: it had occurred to her that events might have three dimensions in time as objects had three in space,—or they might have fewer. If, for instance, their roots stretched down into the past, they had depth; if they branched into the future they had breadth and outlook and bigness.

Her frown returned. . . . It was impossible to see where her married situation rooted and whither it tended. . . .

Susanna, opening her eyes in order to remain blind to this inner vision that again threatened her, cautiously and slowly withdrew from the window. And again the room, deep in the twilight of dawn, mild and cool, received her, and again she stood quite still, poised on tiptoes like some winged creature ready for flight, yet pinioned, pathetic, lost. And again with a profound sigh she looked about her for something to distract her mood.

Love Days

Wherever she looked she received pleasant impressions. From the cream walls, and the faded magnificence of the paintings; from the antique brocade of watery blue that garnished the Empire furnishings; from the crystal chandeliers and candelabra; from the rounded dressing table with gleaming gold spots.— But nowhere was there anything to occupy her.

She finally threw herself dispiritedly on the lounge. It happened that the cheval glass, that contributed its note of imperial elegance to the room, was placed in such a way that it reflected the whole length of her stretched-out body enveloped by the dim light. She studied herself . . . How relaxed a creature she was . . . how yielding and intimately she lay on the cushioned silk . . . how lovely was her pale amber drapery against the watery blue, and her milky skin and shining copper curls against the delicate watery blue. . . . A sudden flush mounted to her cheeks—: she suddenly found herself very lovely, and she wondered whether she were seeing straight and objectively . . . Could she really be as lovely as this image . . . when had she grown so beautiful?— And for an oblivious moment her certainty made her happy, happy and humble, as though suddenly, in the midst of painful poverty, there had been bestowed upon her an unexpected wonderful gift.— For a moment she forgot all else. The next moment her husband stirred and awakened.

“Suzanne, Suzanne!” he called from the bed.

“Oui monsieur,” she answered, without moving.

“Chérie, où es tu?”

“J’ suis là, monsieur.”

“Que fais tu?”

“Je m’admire.”

He bounded from the bed, and in a flash he was beside her, vehemently embracing her and kissing her.

“How are you, how did you sleep, why did you get up, how long have you been awake, you should have awakened me?” came from him like a hot avalanche.

She stroked his hair and gave him a little shove.

“Dites, do I look like a Greek archaic this way, or not? Look into the mirror.”

“I won’t look until you tell me you love me. You love me still, I believe, or not?” He asked this question for the thousand

Susanna Moore's

and first time in the same crisp and worried and intense way in which one asks for practical information of which one is in immediate need, Susanna thought; whether, for instance, one's train from New York to Chicago had left without one.

She noted again for the thousand and first time the eager compression of his firm lips, most beautiful in this expression; the intensity of his romantic stare; the arrested mobility of his graceful body expressive of a refusal to live on until released by the expected answer;—she saw all these disproportioned expressionist goings-on for the thousand and first time, and they came to her, upon her tragic mood, so lightly and funnily that she burst out laughing.

"What do you think about it?" she threw out.

"You laugh; why do you laugh? I find you should not laugh when I ask you whether you love me. Do you love me still?" he repeated, with an increase in the tone of searching inquiry, and a suggestion of threat.

Susanna continued to laugh; she laughed almost hysterically: he was too wonderfully simple and consistent and invariable, since he had lost most of his humour or had excluded it from the sphere of marriage. She saw him flush and pale, spring up and cross the room undecidedly, and his progress through the room suggested to her the progress of a schoolboy ordered to stand in the corner with his back turned to the class,—a child rebuked. . . . What a queer reaction, she thought: to run away and look guilty when some one has been mean to you . . . And yet how pathetic was this rare boyishness! She stopped laughing: she had not meant to be mean; he was too—too handsome, too charming, too easy; everything about him was easy—except the fact that he was, that he existed. . . .

"Topsy darling," she called to him, modulating her voice to the cooing singsong he claimed to love; "come here and I'll tell you why I laugh."

In the flash of an eye he was back; back on his knees, back in the same pose, back with the identical expression, back with the same question, now in its one thousand and third edition—as Susanna realized: "Do you love me?"

Susanna, who badly wanted to laugh again, only smiled. "Mon Dieu, what persistency, what obstinacy," she murmured as she took his immobile head in her hands, much as he would have

Love Days

taken hers, and bending it back, as he would have bent hers, kissed him lingeringly on the mouth, as he would have kissed her. "Are you answered?" she breathed, veiling the twinkle in her eyes and looking into his much as he looked into hers.

The performance gave satisfaction; Pol's power to get along with things revived. He relaxed visibly from the lover to the so to say general human being.

"Let me see, let me see you archaic," he cried, veering about on his knees and dropping to the floor to get her view of herself. "Archaic—why you call yourself archaic. You are much better than that: you are a Grodz!" He laughed his rippling little laugh to soften the assertion. "You are adorable! As always, *du reste*," he added, turning his head to kiss her nearest arm. "At any rate, you will soon be a Grodz!" He jumped up. "Stay just as you are," he called, "I'm fetching my drawing things. You wish that, do you not, my angel?"

"Yes, yes," she called back, "I'd like it."

Susanna lay quite still, and somehow she felt that this was her final position; that she could proceed no farther into this day. And she felt Pol's coming absorption in work as a blessed reprieve; as an interval that might even by some happy chance bring something invigorating to her sickly mood. . . .

He returned at once with his things, and swiftly pulled up the blinds, moved the mirror away and his stool into its place, seated himself with his pad on his knees, and began to draw.

Susanna watched him. He had thrown on a midnight-blue kimono of her own selection, and his golden throat and head arose from it as though from an onyx pedestal.

How beautiful he was, she thought, and what a wonderful artist he was . . . How his intensity assumed dignity and beauty in the absorption of work, now that he was no longer repeating old situations automatically with the airs of a creator,—now that he really was creating; creating fresh beauty for the world. . . .

This was the real reason why she loved him, Susanna told herself as she lay watching him; this was the real man she loved,—a creative artist filled with purpose and reality,—perhaps a genius!

She grew lighthearted and a little happy, as though something fatal had been obliterated, or at least averted. And she gazed at

Susanna Moore's

him, trying to absorb and, as it were, store him up, in this most favourable phase.

After ever so long she asked: "Can't we have breakfast soon, Topsy? I'm frightfully hungry."

He threw his things down at once. "Pauvrette! How selfish of me! She's hungry!"

Once more he was at her side; his solicitude was overwhelming.

"Dear," she cried, sitting up and pushing him away gently, "I want coffee, not kisses."

"Both, both!" he laughed.

She shook him off. "Go order our breakfast to be brought in a quarter of an hour. Topsy, be nice."

She rose to look at the drawing; he followed; they stood before it together, his arm around her.

Certainly she was here a Grodz. It was less certain, she thought, that she was herself.

"Do you know, Pol," she said, "this creature, me, felt by you or seen by you, is really a union of you and me, isn't she?" And the idea delighted her until she realized that it held good for any one. "I suppose that is what a portrait by an artist really is: a spiritual union of him and his subject," she added, disappointed. "Yes?" she turned to him.

"You have charming ideas, my child; charming, but not always true. Spiritual unions don't interest me as much as real ones." He kissed her. "I will tell you what we'll do! I'll finish this on the beach, if you want me to, when we go down. I'll take some pillows for you; that will give you the same pose, and your bathing suit will do even better, being wet—Let's hurry and have breakfast."

While she prepared for breakfast, Susanna tried to abstain deliberately from thinking. This was a difficult thing for her to accomplish, however, because she so seldom thought deliberately;—thoughts came to her spontaneously, without deliberation, and her only method of control was to be doing or feeling something so absorbing that there was neither time nor space for other thoughts to crop up.— And lovely days were no longer absorbing.

Love Days

They breakfasted in a little room adjoining their bedroom, a little yellow room with a painted Venetian table and chairs, and two shelves Pol had put up, one for his things and one for Susanna's books and papers. Both shelves terminated in vases of flaming flowers, and the walls were covered with Pol's occasional drawings. A gay and frivolous little room, even in the dim light of the closed shutters.

Susanna tried desperately to think of some new and distracting way of spending the day. But she could think of nothing. Pol was as usual perfectly ready for anything. He suggested Naples, and a visit to the Museum; he suggested Sorrento, Amalfi, even Paestum. . . . Anything suited and apparently pleased him. But the moment he formulated these plans, Susanna realized them in detail. The one would mean a hot steamer trip, and a drive through the sun-baked streets of the city, and stench, and noise; the other a dusty ride in the broiling sun, and flies bothering the horses, and noise. And both: long overheated days filled with an impatient desire to get indoors.

"No, it's too hot; it's going to be hotter than ever," she decided, discouraged. "We had better stay here and spend the day in the water."

"Tant mieux, tant mieux," he agreed; "we will then go down as soon as you wish, and finish the drawing while it is still cool!"

He looked ready to jump to the beach through the window, Susanna thought; he looked like an arrow always about to be shot off . . . And the rest of the picture, herself, a bow at tension, ready to shoot him off, flashed through her mind. . . . "Yes, dear," she said sweetly, "we'll go soon."

She rose from the table languidly, drew her gown about her languidly, crossed over to him languidly, and kissed him on the throat quickly in reparation of these thoughts which, to be sure, she disowned, but which were, after all, continually occurring in her head this morning.

He jumped up to repay her in kind, but she had fled and slammed the door.

"Getting ready!" she sang out from her room.

Getting ready consisted for them in putting on their bathing things, for no one could see them on their way to the beach but the servants and the inmates of the house, an Italian lady and her

Susanna Moore's

two young daughters, who rented their primo piano to recommended forestieri and provided for them. Once on the beach they vanished completely from the view of all but rowers-by. And even such occasional intruders they could evade easily enough by swimming into the adjoining cave, their own private cave,—a rich opalescent grotto of shimmering greens and corals.

When they were ready they strolled down through the orchard slowly. It was already very warm. Pol wore black, and looked shining and cool. Susanna was again in pale amber, only a few shades darker than her flesh, looking much as a Spartan girl ready for the games might have looked. Her curly hair, held back from her temples with shell combs, streamed to her shoulders like molten copper. Presently she would tuck it into a flame coloured cap.

When they reached the water's edge Pol at once plunged into its pale blue coolness, while Susanna let herself fall to the sand in a heap; gradually, languidly, luxuriously stretching out to the embrace of the sun.

And the sun poured down on her; beat down on her; and she thought that if she exposed herself completely, it might yet beat her into insensibility; and she wished that it would . . . But strong puffs of morning breeze blew in from the water, and kept her alive and fresh, and her thoughts, instead of melting or swooning, frolicked about in her mind. She squinted over at the water from where Pol's explosive metallic voice was calling things to her, while he floated near shore. She looked, but she felt unequal to listening: she knew that it was the same water conversation of yesterday and all the preceding days.

Pol was floating. The heat, too, seemed to be floating, just above, in a huge balloony mass between the sun and herself, and only the playful breezes kept it from pouncing on her. And she too felt floating, spiritually floating, in something unsubstantial and unreal, in some fluid episode without beginning or end. . . .

Pol floated nearer. It occurred to her that floating was really his typical position; that even when he lay on solid earth he gave the impression of floating; that his apparent compliance with the convention of gravitation was counteracted by an innate tendency to flight; result: floating.

And,—she pursued her thoughts,—his work, too, floated,

Love Days

floated or shot up. Even his sketches of her. And she—physically, at least—did not float nor shoot up; physically she felt no tension or lightness; physically she was relaxed and languid; horizontal, as it were, with movements of emotion like the great swell of the wave. . . .

She wondered how she looked at this moment, with her four limbs stretched out to the sun, and the short thick stream of her glossy hair on the glittering sand . . . Like a sleepy Bacchante, or a shipwrecked corpse . . . Nice, anyway. . . .

She tucked her hair into her cap and turned over on her side in the hot sand; she began to feel sleepy. So here she was, she reflected lazily, for the nth time, on this beautiful beach, with the shores of Italy shimmering across the water, and sunny Europe of all kinds not too distant;—Spain on one side, and Greece on the other; and the tropical seas and isles down yonder; and nearby, floating in the Tyrrhenian Sea, a lover who loved her and was beautiful.

She suddenly felt like a cool oyster that had fallen into a boiling soup and didn't know how to get out. She laughed a little at this, but ironically. . . . A disgusting picture, she thought,—what can be happening to me!

Pol was shaking her,—playfully. "Wake up, lazy one; I want to draw you; I want to kiss you." And he flung himself down beside her.

And in another moment the languid Susanna had jumped up and dashed into the water.

The shock of the cold, the exhilaration of the new wet feeling converted her, remade her. She splashed and dove and jumped about lustily, uttering, in turn, water-cries and formless shouts.— And after a time she turned happily and swam out into the sea, swam straight out, farther and farther, and it seemed to her that she was swimming into some blessed Lethæan spot.— And after a time she felt tired, and, surrounded by cool blue water, she rested on her back, dull and dim and only half conscious and quite happy, as though drugged.— And after a time, shouts, growing louder and louder, penetrated into her consciousness:—Pol's shouts.— And looking languidly toward shore, she saw him in the distance, an advancing spot, and she again turned over lazily, and swam slowly toward him.— And as they approached each other his shouts ceased, and when they met he failed to answer her

Susanna Moore's

hello.— They swam back together in silence, but Susanna was unobservant: to the exclusion of all else she was conscious of a feeling that she had returned from a happy holiday.

When she reached the beach she sank down on the sand in a state of mild exhaustion; a pleasant state, she thought, as she stretched out again; a state full of pleasant bodily sensations—coolness and lassitude, delicious tingling lassitude. Even the rhythm of her laboured breathing was pleasant. . . .

She at length became conscious of Pol kneeling beside her, and, turning, she smiled sweetly into the face which he had, as it were, pushed forward into hers, and in which her smile seemed to produce the contortion of rage.

"I controlled myself," he shouted at her, "because we were swimming and needed to be calm. You are a stupid child! What you just did was the act of a stupid child! A wild boy, and not a woman! You will never do such a thing again! You will promise me! There was no sense in what you did," he shouted still louder, "there should be moderation in all, especially in a woman! What have I said,—a woman! There are times when I doubt that you are a woman! You have shocked me with your childish behaviour, you have shocked me profoundly. Promise never to do such a thing again." And he grabbed her shoulders which were shaking with laughter.

"Oh, Pol, you are too amusing when you're paternal and scolding."

"Promise me!" he shouted again, ignoring this.

Susanna, who had in turn grabbed his shoulders to prevent him from shaking her, looked into his angry eyes, and her own smiled subtly and a little excitedly.

"I like you when you scold; you become so human, so almost like a real friend," she drawled softly.

"Qu'est-ce que c'est que tout cela encore!— A friend! I am not your friend! I am your husband!" he shouted, unconciliated.

"Exactly." Susanna laughed again, ironically, but still excitedly.

"Stop laughing, c'est ridicule!" he shouted again. "You act like a child, a gosse! I am your husband, which means friend and lover, and I shall make a woman of you yet, in spite of yourself!"

Love Days

He still was holding her shoulders, although no longer shaking them; he was absorbed now in his own excitement, staring at her with a great deal of belligerency and a little pained uncertainty.

Susanna caught the uncertainty, the weakness, and she in turn weakened and melted. She melted from half-tasted ironic humour to a sweet compassion. She dropped her shining wet head on his arm and whispered: "Pol, chéri, you are exaggerating awfully; you really are quite ridiculous, but I'm sorry I frightened you. You know very well that I do grow up for your especial benefit." She lifted her eyes slowly to his. "When I try to be a woman, what you call a woman, just to please you, don't I once in a while succeed?" She drew his handsome angry head to hers, she laid her cheek against his. "Do I not, chéri? Say that you are in good humour again, Topsy."

But Pol kept his eyes averted, and his face was angry, hurt, stony, indifferent—all together.

Susanna experienced a revulsion of feeling. Very well then, she decided, as annoyance and anger drove the blood to her cheeks,—very well then, if she could not steer this situation back into its habitual shallow and easy-flowing channel,—well, then not: she washed her hands of it. She neither understood this scene nor did she wish to . . . Dear God . . . And Susanna felt a horrid tragic shadow descend upon her; she felt a lump gather in her breast, and she bit her lips, as releasing Pol, she rolled over on her side and buried her face in her arms. . . . She buried her face in her arms and wished she were completely buried somewhere, anywhere,—only away from all this turmoil of feeling, this clouded formless threatening confusion of feeling. . . .

Her husband touched her. "Suzette, speak to me, my little darling . . . I was only fooling before . . . I reproved you because I adore you!"

If only he were away, if only she were alone, she thought.

"Speak to me; I cannot be happy unless you do."

If only he were away for just a day.

"You haven't said a sweet thing to me since last night, voyons."

If he would only go away for a few hours.

He was kissing the nape of her neck, gently.

If he would only go away somewhere for one single hour, so that she could be by herself to think;—go right away, now.

Susanna Moore's

"Ma Suzette adorée," he whispered, "you can do with me what you will, and you know it. You can frighten me and bully me, and treat me like a slave, and I take it all and lie at your feet and kiss them." He did so. "And wait for you to take me back to grace. . . . Suzette, angel, do not be angry with me any longer!"

He thinks he has hurt me, he thinks I am prostrate because he has scolded me. . . . Susanna could have screamed with laughter, had she not been so near to tears.— And she lay on the hot sand, wondering how she could go on without him, and how she could go on with him; overwhelmed, confused, empty, at a loss; casting about, catching nothing; oblivious of his caresses—really lost and closed out. And suddenly, blessedly, an idea floated into her mind, and she clutched it, full of gratitude.

She opened her eyes. Her lips, which he was kissing, smiled faintly as she said: "There is only one way in which you can make up with me. Go on with your drawing immediately, and never mention your reproaches again!"

"But certainly," he acquiesced; "*mais oui, m'amie, ma petite gosse, ma petite femme adorée—tout ce que tu dis.*"

"Tais toi, alors; and get ready; I'll go in for a minute to get my drapery wet. It's quite dry now."

She rolled into the shallow water and she thought how heavenly felt the touch of the cold water after the heat of the sun; and the heat of her mood, and the touch of his caresses;—how heavenly it would be to lie here alone, all alone, and by and by to go to sleep. . . .

She suddenly sprang up again, and, arrested by surprise, stood poised for further movement. She knew herself to be fuller of involuntary movements today than she had been in years; than she had been since the days of her early youth when she had bowed to coercion, and her inner protest had expressed itself in these uncontrolled actions and reactions; before she had been free to obey herself alone; before she had, under her own rule, become tractable and poised and mild. And in retrospect she even knew what it was that had caused her to spring up before her will had had a chance to inhibit or confirm her intention: she knew it was a vague notion that a sacrifice of comfort would prove a pleasant change from this terribly constant sacrifice of privacy. . . .

Love Days

She stood arrested in thought, poised for movement. Her scant wet drapery clung to her slim round body; her wet waves of copper hair lay close to her head and gave to it the egg-like shape and the lustre of Pol's own head and of those of his creations; she glistened in the sunlight like some alabaster thing touched here and there with sombre gold.

Pol was approaching with his paraphernalia. "Stay just as you are," he cried, "I will catch you like this! You are incredibly beautiful like this: you are just right like this!"

"Oh, no," she replied, "not much; not here, I mean, with the sun streaming down on me! I really couldn't, not for more than five minutes. We ought to have a strand umbrella. . . ."

"En effet! I will get one tomorrow in Naples."

"Perhaps they have them here in town."

"I will go up today, this afternoon. We will go together to shop for it after déjeuner, yes?"

"We'll see. But where shall we go now? How about the cave?"

"En voilà une idée! What a girl you are! You really have ideas! There will be beautiful semi-light, semi-darkness, and mystery, and your shining flesh—" And continuing his enthusiastic praises he rushed her along as one rushes a new find, thought Susanna, an old painting, chair, or bibelot, very anxious to get it placed where one wanted it. His solicitude was not functioning in the least,—and in that there was comfort.

They waded through the water into the cave, and managed somehow to reach the paraphernalia across the water to one another. And this made Susanna so hot again that the coolness of the grotto struck her gratefully, like a cooling drink. She climbed up to a flat ledge that ran along on one side, and stretched herself out on the stone which was neither too hot nor too cold.

"Oh delicious," she sighed, placing the cushions Pol pitched to her under her back. "Where are you going to sit?"

"Opposite, of course."

There was a fragment of ledge on the opposite side, narrow and uneven. It would cramp him badly, and there was but one thing to be done with his legs that had to support the pad on his knees, and that was to place them on the submerged projecting

Susanna Moore's

ledge below, which meant that they too would be submerged in the water, cold here in the perpetual shade.

Pol got into this uncomfortable position without comment; got to work at once, and remained at work without comment.

Susanna reflected on his stoicism and tried to revive a flame of enthusiasm that would burn up all thoughts but those devoted to his fineness. This, she told herself, was why she loved him,—because he never went limp, because in the absorption of work he cast off all smallness, because he was, now, so completely moved by spirit. . . .

Yes, at this moment he really did seem immaterial! His body was, as it were, irradiated by purpose, by mind; and she was to him but an opportunity to form; she was the material with which to create a thing that would express his own visual reality. His sharp eyes flew from her to his pad; his quick gestures were unhesitating and precise; from time to time he gave her a direction to pull her draperies this way or that; to change the position of an arm, a foot, a finger.

In the final pose she lay stretched out and yet compact, her legs crossed at the knees, her feet held like a dancer's, her arms about to be crossed yet not touching at the wrists and not quite reaching the point of reclining on the breast, palms turned upward and fingers curling in, the neck twisted so that the chin approached the shoulder. All in all, a pose rigid with frozen action.

He's making me look like himself again, Susanna thought, and she felt the likeness throughout her stiffening body. How remarkable it was that he was able to make her relaxed body float up rigidly like his own. . . . And how interesting it was that he was quite unconscious of doing anything to her other than make her correspond as closely as possible to a definitely felt but unanalysed vision of his creative imagination. . . . And how queer that he should accept nothing of her but her line and colour . . . that he should reject her movement. . . . And even her line he transcribed. . . . And there remained of her only her colour . . . her colour . . . her copper and cream colour. . . .

Thus Susanna's thoughts flowed slowly and thickly, until they ceased to flow at all, and she fell into an opaque and dim state of mere feeling.

Love Days

And in this dimmed state, slowly, and gradually, her senses awakened, one by one, and brought their various gifts. Slowly she became aware of the heavy cool air of the grotto,—thick dim air, with languorous shafts of dusty golden light floating in at the cave's round mouth. . . . And from the wet, pulpy walls of rock there emanated a thick and noiseless sound . . . like sound-dust . . . like the sound of the pedal that continues when the notes have died away. . . . Or was it a loud hush? . . . or perhaps only the quality of the silence between the gentle swish of the waves on the flanks of the cave? . . .

Gentle little wave-noises . . . moist little caressing sounds . . . like wet kisses. . . .

And soon there arrived the damp smells . . . they, too, moist and thick . . . and briny and pungent . . . suggestive of a thousand things of the deep sea. . . . And they, too, coming in rhythmic waves—in delicious little assaults and retreats like their sisters, the water-waves . . . coming with that sweet regularity that somehow seems to bear sensory witness to eternity. . . .

And, gradually, all that came to Susanna's body came moist and heavy and green and with the pungency of salt, as though it had risen from the primeval depths of the salty, slimy beginnings of life, when there was nothing but warm water and slime and germs and salt. . . . And Susanna surrendered herself to the pleasures of the moment,—she almost ceased to be anything but pulsating, pleasure-feeling animal rhythm.— Her rigid pose alone interposed itself between the felt moment and the eternity of the semi-conscious.

"I shall paint this life-size—in flesh and gold and greens— If I were a sculptor I should put it in alabaster and golden bronze. You alabaster, the pointed waves and the drapery bronze. But I will give the same impression—you will be seen, you will be felt— It will be wonderful, I believe! But more wonderful without drapery—a little floating drapery perhaps beside you, but none to cover you. I cannot get the line of your torso since your chiffon is dry—"

"But no one can see me. I'll take it off. It's quite easy."

There was a pause.

"It is very adorable of you," he finally snapped. "I'd help you, but I'm afraid to change my position. Move as little as possible, please!"

Susanna Moore's

"No need—there are two buttons—c'est vite fait—c'est fait!"

Susanna closed her eyes again. Pol's voice was like a metallic bell breaking into the muffled music of the grotto, she thought. A locomotor bell, or a fire-alarm. . . . And suddenly she felt horribly fatigued,—and it felt chilly without anything on. Although there was, perhaps, a certain satisfaction in the thought that she was leaving nothing undone to flavour this being-married-to-a-beautiful-genius situation, which was already beginning to acquire such a curiously dull and empty quality. . . . Here she was, possibly, probably, having her beautiful body immortalized, so that she would some day perhaps be pointed out by Museum guides and Baedekers to generations of American travellers, and for all she knew to Africans and Asiatics and Australian natives,—and even Fiji-Islanders might some day be sight-seeing. . . . She, together with Venuses and Pauline Borghese and Simonetta. . . .

The world was strange. To ponder over it was not altogether satisfying, and to plunge into it—was it more satisfying? . . . Did the consciousness of helping an artist to produce a masterpiece even with ensuing immortality in a Museum compensate one for a protracted honeymoon . . . ? — Well, not her. . . .

Susanna flushed as she realized some of the implications of this admission, and she suddenly felt quite foolish and false with her distorted muscles tingling with pain in a position which she would not have taken to the end of time were it not that the man opposite happened to like people to have this particular design. . . .

And it flashed through her mind that, on the contrary, what she really at this moment strongly suggested was not this grasshoppery creature she felt herself, but its opposite: a snail. . . . A snail in a mother-of-pearl covering. . . . There was something about her skin in this strange vibrating light that was of the texture of mother-of-pearl; and something about her habitually languid movements and the close contact of her mind with the chaotic and unilluminated subconscious—the slimy womb of reality—that suggested the sticky snail.— And although Susanna might not have enjoyed this picture so much had any one else conceived it, she enjoyed it hugely as her own and proceeded leisurely to adorn it with further decorative thoughts. Thus—she decided

Love Days

—like a snail, too, she threw out no separate limbs, but moved all harmoniously in one undivided whole, warned only by her feelers as to whether her shimmering, opalescent body was exposed to friend or foe. . . . And like a snail she could withdraw into the protection of her house—the house of her spirit. . . . And like a snail she was, in her protection, invulnerable—invulnerable—invulnerable. . . . But now so tired and cramped . . . so ridiculously cramped. . . . The little rippling waves seemed to be laughing at her. . . .

And before she was fully aware of what she was doing, she had relaxed her body, snatched up her gown, and stretched out with a sigh and a cry.

Pol exclaimed: “Mais non, mais non, voyons—just as I am finishing!”

“Mais oui, voyons!” she cried. “I’m stiff! I’ve had enough for one day! It’s been at least an hour. I’m dead tired, and as soon as I’m limbered up I’m going into the water, and there you are, Topsy!”

“Bien!” He was already packing up his things. “Tomorrow then, since you’re tired; or this afternoon at home. But it’s a pity. It’s going to be wonderful—the colour of alabaster and golden coppery bronze and the changing greens of the sea, and you on the fine points of the tight rippling waves.”

“The waves will be a reproduction of your hair.” And I shall be a reproduction of you, thus she finished the thought internally.

“And I may put a comb in your hair.”

“Yes;—but how in the world did you come to think of it, since you could never have a comb in your own hair?” Susanna laughed.

“You are talking nonsense again, my child; you are adorable, but when you talk about art you talk nonsense.”

“Well,” Susanna said absently, “so does every one else.”

“Ça, c’est vrai!” he shouted. “There you have said something true. Moderns do not even know what art is—they have lost their understanding of it—Even a definition is not found. Who among them has said what is the criterion of art? No one, as I have told you before.”

Indeed you have, Susanna thought.

“But I can tell you. I can tell you true and beautiful things. I can—”

Susanna Moore's

"Heavens, how this pose has cramped me; I can hardly lift a finger . . . I must get this thing on, and go into the water forthwith to revive," Susanna interrupted.

She was getting to be quite a manager, she reflected uneasily; she might even be becoming clever . . . How horrible to be in danger of becoming undesirable things through him and through this . . . both so absolutely light except for their legal weight . . . Good Heavens, what thoughts came to her! And she flushed as she struggled with her suit and her sandals on the narrow ledge,—flushed with fright at the independence of her thoughts and the ineffectiveness of her control.

When finally she emerged from the twilight of the grotto into the blinding sunlight, she found Pol stretched out on the sand, little waves running over him.

She lay down beside him in the shallow cool water so grateful to her cramped body.

After a healing interval of silence she remarked on it. He took no notice of her words, lying in immobility . . . She continued to talk; he continued to remain oblivious.

"Qu'as tu, mon cher?" she asked sweetly, expecting some new sentimental reproach.

"I don't know. I'm tired, too, I believe . . . N'importe—My head hurts." He frowned; his voice was snappy but sullen.

Susanna melted like April snows. The stoic had complained, and it touched her deeply. All at once he seemed closer, realer, and she felt suddenly fonder; yes, she suddenly felt quite simply fond of him.

She put her arm under his neck and drew his head to her breast and pillowed it in the hollow of her arm and breast. How differently sweet he was, yielding and silent and heavy like this,—and beautiful. She kissed his forehead that hurt him.

"What a shame, mon petit Topsy, mon chéri, who worked too hard! Indeed you did . . . you tried to get it done while I was still amiable . . . It's my fault that you are tired. . . ."

There was silence, continued silence. Every moment she found him, yielding himself to her in the immobility of suffering, newer, and more strangely enchanting. She left her lips on his eyes. . . .

Love Days

The wavelets ran up and down their bodies, and she continued to hold his frowning head on her arm, deliciously heavy, as though he were dead,—no, as though he were a child. . . .

"Poor Topsy . . . beau chéri . . ." she murmured endearing things to him, "I adore you this way, my little boy . . . my little doll . . . I can do with you what I please, and you cannot smile . . . nor speak . . . nor move at all . . . not at all . . . unless I fix you . . ."

She was tenderly amused at her play as she placed his passive arms around her neck— He let her do;—she moved his head to the level of her own.

"And now I shall kiss you as a devoted mother would kiss her beautiful tired son with a headache she had given him."

She did so.

"And now, mon fils," her voice grew very sweet, vibrant, and a little broken—"kiss me as a tired son would kiss a devoted mother, tenderly and gratefully, and a little indifferently."

In the flash of an eye Pol had caught himself up and her with him; had strained her roughly to him, and covered her with kisses,—hard, unloving kisses that seemed to Susanna to bruise her flesh and almost break her bones.— She struggled away in anger—he kissed her again and again, on her face, her throat, her neck, her arms,—anywhere he could catch her, as she tried to dodge and evade him.

She thought him gone mad, madly unbeautiful, as, gathering together the strength of her anger, she gave him a final push away from her, and escaped.

Gone was her tenderness, and all the sweet humanness she had felt in him and for him—as though they had never been. . . . She pulsed with fury as she retreated, and sat at a distance, limp and yet strained; staring at him dazed and glowering. She pulsed with fury, and she felt the tide of her temper rise higher and higher, threatening to submerge her.— She placed her hand over her mouth as though to hold back the utterance of her anger; and although she heard Grodz's shrill voice, in the strain of her effort to control herself she caught but little of what he said.

For, propped on an arm and quivering with exhaustion and excitement, he was again shouting.

"I don't understand you," he was shouting. "You treat me like a child—you treat me like a stranger. You divest yourself of

Susanna Moore's

your clothes; you lie nude before me without an emotion—like a model before her painter—not like a wife before her husband, her lover— Without a sign of emotion— Unconscious like a child— You seem to forget all—that I am your lover—that you love me— that I have taught you to love me—that I have taught you to love—have taught you everything! You were a child when you came to me—in feeling a child! It is I who taught you to love!” he shrieked. “You do not love me—I do not know whether you love me—Suzanne, do you hear me—do you love me?”

He glared at her with glittering cold light in his eyes—a leopard ready to spring.

Susanna sat immobile, struggling with her temper. But his fury at her, which she apprehended without getting much of its articulation, tended to abate her own a little, and a dim feeling that *her* fury was directionless and of unplumbed cause helped to control its expression. She knew only that she was pulsating with anger, and that she must keep it down. . . .

“Answer me!” he cried again, but with far less heat and assurance, as she sat silent, livid and limp, staring at him and through him with a strange light in her eyes.

There was but one thing to do, she vaguely knew, since her thoughts were submerged under this tide of dark anger, and since nothing could dissipate it, and that was rejection—rejection of the whole situation. She must at once push it away, into the past or the future—indifferent which. She must push it out of the present.— She rose.

“I’m too hot to argue. I don’t feel well. I’m going in.”

She did feel queer and shaken as she got up with difficulty; even her voice sounded queer to her, heady and floating, as though unconnected with her throat. Her body too felt light; the light seemed to get into her, the ever increasing glare of the sun.

She lurched dangerously as she walked forward in the sand, until Pol caught her up and, supporting her, walked with her. She bit her lips to keep from flinching at his touch; it pricked her like needles and pinched her like screws, not so much because it was his, as because she needed so desperately to feel no nearness at all,—to be free of him, and of everything. . . .

Linked together they walked to the house in ugly silence; she,

Love Days

pale, and frowning with despairing distaste and bewilderment; he, pale, and scowling with baffled anger.

On the threshold of her room she said in a voice that could hardly be recognized: "Thank you. I shall lie down. Leave me, please."

She did not look at him, and she did not hear his reply, angry, snappy, and yet uncertain: "Très bien. I shall be in the next room or downstairs." It was as though she could not bear to receive any more of him, actually, in sense-perception.

She changed to a wrapper; drenched her handkerchief in alcohol, as she had sometimes done when sea-sick; and threw herself on the lounge in the cool and darkened room. Already she felt distinctly relieved. He, for a time at least, was caged in some other space. For a time at least she was free from him, free to try to think, to try to understand what it was that had happened to her, to them . . . For she must think; she must know something definite . . . She could not go on in this nightmare of in-consequence. . . .

Her aching head was flat on the cushions; her eyes closed, her mouth drawn with suffering, her skin so pale that the veins showed blue. She was hardly herself—at least not completely herself. But she was conscious, as she lay still, of the slow ebbing of her exhausted and anchorless fury, and the gradual rise of her power to think.

Where then should she begin—where was the beginning? . . . Was it her marriage with him . . . or her meeting with him . . . or was it before that—was it the others? But she was unequal to the effort of retreating further into the past than her marriage. . . .

She had been happy with him; she had been pleased. She had occasionally been enthusiastically pleased. Their first days together—: spent in the country in a place filled with early spring;—with a lovely pale-green early spring . . . And they—the three of them—had been so close, so intimate, so in harmony. . . .

She pictured the old white Colonial house, the red brick terrace splashed with the light shade of the budding maples, the lacy delicacy of the tall elms, the lilac bushes in bloom, and across the lawn scented meadows and a tinkling stream . . . And themselves lying on the warm grass, together with some late lilies of the

190

Susanna Moore's

valley and some early shining beetles, and above their heads, white butterflies and pale-blue sky and breezes playing in the trees. . . .

Spring . . . delicate spring . . . dainty, dancing, delicate spring . . . And he, like a golden faun, darting through it, a part of it . . . offering it to her in a hundred ways. Spring, delicate, fresh and cool, dancing, harmless spring . . . White butterflies and cool scents and cool greens and cool breezes . . . lilac lilacs . . . and a golden faun . . . Easy . . . harmless . . . lovely spring . . . delicate . . . dancing spring. . . .

Susanna roused herself again to thought.— Their love-affair: so pleasantly playful, so cool in its very intensity, so like a pretty diverting game, prettier at some times than at others, but always well defined, always respectful of the private depths. And he had behaved so prettily; he had been so easy to please, so easy to make happy, so easy to sway without effort . . . She had wanted to make him happy, it had pleased her to be able to make him happy, and with so little effort,—with just a part of herself, just a little of herself . . . And she had had no more than a little of himself, she knew, but it was that of him which she could understand and feel with and love . . . All that she had need for . . . And he had had all of her that suited him, and it had seemed to both enough when they so pleasantly became acquainted with one another during their long days together, and their nights, when they lay in one another's arms and embraced one another's beauty and embraced the new and charming world it created.

But evidently it wasn't enough of beauty to last. . . .

Susanna's head was bursting with pain, but it was also bursting with a brightly illumined awareness that love had in her case not lasted . . . that she loved him less . . . that she loved him only enough, now, to want him to have everything he desired excepting herself. . . .

And he—he seemed, on the contrary, to want more and more of her; he seemed to desire her to be in some queer quantitative sense increasingly his: he seemed to want no more than he already possessed, but to want this more concentratedly, intensely, violently . . . He seemed to want her to enjoy increasingly not an increasing love, but the existing relationship . . . It was as though he expected a short tune to grow more enchanting and exciting with every repetition!

Love Days

Susanna lay still on the couch with her aching body and soul, and there arose from their depths, and spread throughout, a great bitterness that she could neither suppress nor comprehend. That she should be overwhelmed like this by failure and ugliness, that this thing she had thought limitless should so have shrunk, that this unreality she was now feeling should be real,—it did not seem possible. . . . And yet she realized what for weeks she had but dimly felt as one feels a storm before its visual signs, that something within her was going wrong and dying, and that she had been trying in a dozen ways, with playful tricks, to revive it, or to ignore it,—somehow to defeat the steady change.

But what could it all mean, after all! He had not changed, neither had she. He was as beautiful, as complete, as vital as when she first lay in his arms with an emotion very like rapture, and certainly with pleasure, and as far as she knew, with spiritual comfort. And now, too, she derived satisfaction from the sight of his beauty, the beauty of his body and his ready spirit. And the love of his body was not distasteful to her—it neither disgusted nor repelled her, it simply affected her in some deadening way,—it made her feel half dead. The love of his body and the love of his spirit together. . . .

And now his persistence, and his insistence, his violent insistence, had goaded her into a fury she thought her spirit had long ago succeeded in casting out of her blood. . . .

And if he loved her more—more intensely and passionately—, how could it be that she loved him less? . . . Oh, how could it be! And if it was nevertheless thus, why should it seem, not tragic, but only dull and ugly— For so it seemed—so it was—to her!

Susanna turned her face into her cushions to crush and silence the sobs that broke out and shook her. For the first time in her life she longed for some one to lean on and draw comfort from,—some one like a mother. Some one who would by her mere presence neutralize this stranger she was bound to. . . .

He was somewhere in the house— If he only would go away—to Naples, or up to the town—she might feel less lonely, less chained to loneliness . . . Her confusion might lift . . . she might be able to think . . . she might be able to lift her headache from her bursting head with healing thoughts . . . with healing thoughts . . . With thoughts of how to restore everything, and

Susanna Moore's

make them both happy before it was too late . . . For, after all, she was herself, and no one, and nothing, could change her if she did not permit it . . . She was herself, undiminished. She was herself, and invulnerable. . . .

Susanna sat up, envisaging a whole chain of new thoughts suddenly illumined by this ray of comfort.— If there was this ugliness, was it not she who had caused it, for was it not she who had failed to love? . . . But no, it could not be she who was responsible, for she felt neither guilt nor responsibility. She felt only that this ugly dullness had arisen from the thing, the relationship, itself,—uncaused by him and her . . . by him and her . . . Certainly uncaused by him . . . since he loved more and she loved less . . . Certainly uncaused by him. . . .

And Susanna felt this certainty, this certainty of his innocence, flow through her with a strange strengthening of her spirits. She almost felt the blood return to her cheeks; she really felt her head clear and her spirits jump from the horrible depths in which they had been swamped. He was not to blame for this ugliness,—and already it seemed far less ugly. No, he had not changed; he had, on the contrary, remained incredibly the same—: beautiful, devoted; wanting to give generously. And if he seemed too persistent, and too overwhelming in his generosity, was it not simply because she wanted his devotion and his gifts less . . . Even his foolish violence of before,—what was it but a protest against her indifference?

Susanna now felt so relieved, so comparatively lighthearted, and so thankful, that a certain exhilaration that she had never before experienced, possessed her. For her desperate desire to remain herself and to control the situation became an intellectual certainty. . . . Whatever was the cause of this change that was bringing her such misery, it was she who would eliminate it—it was she who would steer him and herself back into channels that would wash this episode clean of ugliness and make it end in beauty; it was she who would accomplish this, since she was herself—undiminished.

"End in beauty . . . end in beauty," she repeated chantingly, hopefully, finding in the phrase a strangely heartening note. . . .

End in beauty . . . Yes, it must and would; and if she had to swim against the tide of her own nature until her intuition was no longer stifled and her vision no longer clouded by mood,—well,

Love Days

then she would. She would find in herself the strength to suffer while she observed, and the strength for the performance of deeds when it would have become evident what they should be.

She sat up with starry dazed eyes pulled wide open and turned inward, and dimly viewed a different self from the ones she knew;—a more concentrated self, more self-conscious and purposive,—a self dedicated to some vague but compelling purpose. Yes, she saw herself shrink, as it were, into a kernel . . . As a nebular mass condenses into a star, she thought, so she and all her outlying and underlying emotional radiations seemed to condense into a sharp consciousness of purpose. . . .

And Susanna laughed at her restored power to think playfully and superfluously. She laughed happily, for this was proof, she thought, that, even if shrunk to purposiveness, she was herself, herself undiminished.

She jumped up.— The main thing, she recapitulated happily, was that it was not Pol who had failed, but she . . . That it was she who must do all that was necessary to change this situation back to beauty, as soon as she found the way . . . She, who was unharmed, invulnerable, and was soon to be enlightened by self-consciousness and purpose. . . .

“End in beauty . . .” she chanted, as, still weak and unsubstantial, she took a drink from Pol’s brandy flask before proceeding to bathe her eyes, brush her hair, powder and dress. “End in beauty” she chanted, as she bathed her eyes, as she brushed her hair, as she powdered and dressed. . . . It would end in beauty—she would make it.

She dressed leisurely, for it was now indeed very hot. And she put on a gown new to Pol, and lovely . . . For she felt reckless . . . The brandy perhaps, and certainly her newly born indifference to the present and her confidence in herself and the future, ran through her in vitalizing streams.

The dining room was dark, cool and empty: he must be downstairs. She went to the landing, heard his voice, and called softly.

He ran up at once.

“Will you order luncheon to be served at once, mon ami,” she said to him, and with a sudden inspiration she added: “Who is with you? Is it Signorina Annunziata? Ask her to have lunch with us, if you like.”

Susanna Moore's

Pol looked Susanna up and down, or rather down and up,—from her black and white body to her gay smiling mouth and blunted starry eyes—, and her very appearance appeared to wound him, for he froze again into a state of repressed sullenness. Susanna knew very well that she had but to say “I put on this gown for you,” with an oblique glance, to galvanize him into a contented lover,—but this was just what she no longer could afford to do. . . .

“Let’s have her,” she continued, “let’s have her tell us about the mountains! She’s been to Vallombrosa and we might want to go there any minute—it’s so darn hot here now,—don’t you think so, dear? I do,” she pursued, ignoring his silence. “And we’ve squeezed all the fun out of this place, so let’s sip the honey from some other flower. . . .” Her mind was dissipated, pleasantly so— “Let’s hear about Vallombrosa! Order the luncheon, chéri, — I’m quite ready—, and invite the girl.” She gave her dress a little shake. “You like it, even if you don’t say so!” she called to him, smiling pleasantly as she closed the door on his frowning face.

She thought that she had just now done rather well, for this was the thing to do—: to be entirely light and self-possessed, and simply take for granted what she wished. . . . For a moment she realized, to be sure, that this was a mode of behaviour not so very different from her usual one. But she instantly added that the great difference lay in that she would now be acting deliberately, and hence consistently, and that her attitude would thus become an armour without chinks—an armour, at that, which would not look like armour, but only like a shining reflection of her inner state of mind. . . .

She examined herself in the cheval glass. With her hair pulled back by shell combs and her curls gathered into a knot and the dramatic black lace over her gleaming skin, she suggested some very modern “jeune femme mariée” of the stage, “femme incomprise,” waiting for something to turn up: a lover or a tragic incident . . . Nothing, she concluded, was missing to the make-up,—unless it was earrings . . . and those were in the trunk somewhere. . . .

She rummaged about in spite of the heat, and found her jewels. She first tried pearls—too melting and happy. Then black jet—too arty. Emeralds—too theatrical. Finally her long diamond pendants. She laughed. Yes, this was it: glittering, “femme du

Love Days

monde" effect . . . They did not make her hard—it was to be supposed, she thought, that nothing short of protracted misery could do that—but they did sophisticate and sparkle her up, as it were . . . She laughed: chance was strengthening her armour. . . .

Soon Pol came up with the young lady and the luncheon; and when the table was laid he knocked at her door.

"Eh bien, mon ami," he called, "come, come! Here is our guest and our luncheon!"

Susanna was most gracious at luncheon, with a graciousness that embraced Pol and the Signorina equally; an amiability almost effusive in her who normally was only passively amiable. She made Annunziata, a serious pleasant girl, dark-eyed and dark haired and heavy,—and completely fascinated by Susanna's picturesqueness,—speak in Italian instead of in her almost incomprehensible French. And when Pol did not quite understand, she translated for him, and gave him a little incidental instruction.—And she found it almost exhilarating to have another note introduced into their duet—their duet, which had turned into an accompaniment, as it were; so regular, so repetitious, so monotonous had it become—that one could scream with nervousness: with nervous frustrated expectation of hearing a melody. . . .

Annunziata and Susanna compared their travels in Italy. Susanna had seen more than Annunziata and had seen more thoroughly; but she did not know Vallombrosa, and Annunziata did; she had been there some years ago, for a week; and as she talked about it her eyes shone with enthusiasm. The mountains, she avowed, held a great charm for the dweller on the coast. It was their height that counted. Switzerland was even more wonderful than mountainous Italy.—Susanna disagreed about Switzerland;—Switzerland she declared was bearable in winter only. . . . "You don't care for Switzerland, either, do you, Pol?" she asked amiably.

"My wife asks me what I like—" Pol turned to Miss Annunziata. "But it is she who decides where we shall go! Last week it was Greece, and now it is Switzerland and Vallombrosa, and next week it may be the North Pole! For my part, I am quite content here—for my part! I am made that way. I become habituated to places and I like them. I do not desire to change

Susanna Moore's

them all the time, like shirts—like gowns”—looking at Susanna—
“I am not fickle—I am faithful—I—”

Susanna interrupted. “But you will grow accustomed to the next place too, dear; you will discover its charms—we will discover them together— It’s been wonderful here in your most beautiful corner of the world, Signorina; but the heat is too great for me. This morning it seemed to knock me out so completely, down at the beach, that I was almost sorry we ever came—”

Pol stared at Susanna fixedly; Susanna nodded to him. “You noticed it, Pol,” she added airily.

“Oh, today is most unusually hot, Madame,” the girl said earnestly. “You must not think that it will remain like this. Most likely a storm will come tonight, and tomorrow you will find the heat much abated. If it is but because of today’s heat you must not leave us—we shall miss you so very much.” She blushed, and laughed to cover her blush. Pol sent her a sharp glance and then one of pleased appreciation. Susanna replied with a radiantly gracious smile:

“How sweet of you to say so, Signorina Annunziata, and to think so. Grodz and I shall never forget your lovely home and how charmingly you have arranged everything for us, so that we might live in beauty from morning to night. You, and your mother and sister will always be interwoven with the memory of our weeks together here.”

Her husband looked at her as though she were uttering impertinences. “But nevertheless it is to be Vallombrosa or Greece or the North Pole!” he interjected challengingly.

“I have been to Greece too, Madame,” the girl put in. “I have an uncle living in Athens with whom I spent a season. It is a fascinating country, and for you it would be of especial interest, of course.”

Susanna was glad to hear about Greece at first hand from some one neither an American nor a scholar, and Grodz, who claimed Greece on his maternal side, and the art of Greece as his only spiritual parent, was interested too. So they sat on after luncheon, talking Greece, and smoking, and trying to ignore the heat.

When the clock struck two however the Signorina was obliged to return to her household duties, and Pol and Susanna were left together.

Love Days

Susanna was engaged in tipping her chair to and fro on its legs, smoking her fourth cigarette, and staring lazily at the ceiling. Pol glared at her, looking her up and down ironically, and yet uncomfortably.

"Pol dear," she drawled, "it's too hot for you to go out now, but about four o'clock, would you mind going up to town and finding out about trains and express wagons and things, in case we decide to leave here tomorrow or the day after,—if this heat continues. You might telephone for a fiacre, dear."

Pol continued to stare at her sullenly, and it flashed through her mind that his tragic love-stare and his hate-stare were as alike as two eggs—the only perceptible difference being a frown in the latter. Both were equally becoming to him, and for a moment she felt sorely tempted to tell him so,—but that, of course, would never do. . . . She was also tempted to continue for her own entertainment a comparative study of these two states of his; both states of discontent in which he was after the satisfaction of domination. In his love expression was the desire to annihilate her by absorption, and in his hate-state the desire to annihilate her through destruction. . . . Or no,—not quite that. . . .

With a little sigh of resignation Susanna sailed back into her channel of diplomacy. "Don't you think it's too hot here for me? Don't you find me looking poorly?" She screwed up her eyebrows, and made a tragedian's face.

"No!" he burst out, "I don't find you looking poorly! Parole—you look much too well, much too—too—"

Susanna waited for the rest of the sentence with genuine inquiry registered upon her face.

"Much too well—" he shouted—"for a woman in love; a woman who has quarrelled with her lover for the first time this morning! You look much too well, parole!" He lowered at her threateningly.

Susanna felt that if she could expire in laughter, expire, and wake up in another world, life would be ending in perfection. . . . But she remembered that it was not he who was to blame, and it was she who must lead him gently. . . .

"But I enjoyed the quarrel," she replied with pseudo naïveté. "After all it was only the heat. You didn't realize that I was so hot that having you make love to me was physically—painful; the first indelicate thing you have ever done, dear Topsy. . . . But

Susanna Moore's

perhaps since you never are hot you couldn't know how very hot I was. . . ."

Pol's stare lost some of its aggressiveness. He approached her, stuck his handsome cool face close to hers, and inquired: "It was because you were hot that you repulsed me?"

She nodded graciously.

"And it was because you were hot that you took off your clothes like a child or a model—before your lover, 'en pleine air,' without a gesture of recognition of your act?"

Susanna dropped her eyes and bit her lips to keep from shouting with laughter—but in vain! She felt the laughter approaching, coming, coming to shake her. . . . And instinctively—to smother the advancing peril—she rose, and throwing her arms about him vehemently, she buried her head in his shoulder.

He had seen her downcast eyes, and he now felt her body twitch convulsively— The pride of sex arose and dissipated his accumulation of suspicion and doubt. For the sensible fact was: the woman had succumbed; she was prostrate. . . .

"Ma petite Suzanne, ma petite femme adorée, if I was inconsiderate, it was because I adore you so madly,—because I was angry at you! I did not know that you suffered, you poor angel! Let me take care of you, let me take care of you;—I shall carry you into the room to the couch! Compose yourself, my angel."

This was just what Susanna was trying to do in order to keep her judgment clear. Was she on the right track, she wondered? . . . Probably;—but what another bore of a track. Yet Pol as a nurse was at least more novel than Pol as a lover. . . .

"Do, sweetheart," she murmured, with a tired voice and downcast eyes.

He carried her in, kissing her gently on the way. "How beautiful you are today," he whispered. "How earrings become you. . . . Only you look too sophisticated . . . You have the air of an unfaithful woman—do you know that?" He had placed her on the couch, and kneeling beside her, stretched her out like a corpse, and arranged her cushions, her head, her arms, her legs.

Susanna closed her eyes. "How hot it is—how dreadfully hot," she breathed.

"Poor child, poor angel!" Suddenly he cried: "I'm going to take them off, these baubles that make of you an unfaithful woman!"

Love Days

Susanna opened her eyes with an irrepressible gleam of interest. He did have amusing little inspirations. . . . She looked at him with sympathy: if only she could be frank with him,—if only they might play this entertaining game together frankly. . . . But they could not, and it was not his fault that they could not. . . . If he was too much in love with her to be humorous—it was assuredly not his fault. . . . He loved her more, and she loved him less, she again reminded herself.

He had loosened her earrings and cast them aside, and was still kneeling beside her.

“Now you are again my faithful wife!” But apparently she did not yet completely resemble such a one, for he paused in the act of kissing her. “This black dress—” he caressed the pattern, drawing his finger over it, “what a delicate lace!”

“Yes,” she interposed quickly, “that is my weakness: delicacy.”

“But it gives you the air of a widow, or a divorcée, *ma parole*; or of a woman with a past!” He shot a suspicious glance at her. “Let me take it off. It’s too hot for a dress anyway. I’ll get you a *peignoir*.” He shot off to the closet and selected one, a white one.

“*Voilà*,” he cried, back again. “Here is one that becomes you, —white and innocent! As everything becomes you, *du reste*! I believe you are too beautiful! I believe I should love you more if you were less beautiful, *parole*!” He laughed his rippling laugh; he seemed to be restored to his happiest mood, or, at least, on the road to restoration.

“That may arrange itself, if it keeps on being hot.” Susanna sighed, as he helped her out of her dress into her gown; she sighed with boredom. Heat had become her euphemism for boredom.

“Yes,” he continued playfully, as she lay down again, “she is too beautiful. Her hair is beautiful; her ears are beautiful; we shall cover some of her beauties.” He pulled her hair down over her ears.

“Too hot, too hot,” Susanna, who found this amusing because novel, murmured, and pushed her hair back.

“The nose is beautiful; the mouth is beautiful; we shall cover that.” He placed his lips on hers in a lingering kiss.

Susanna laughed when he released her. “That was clever, Topsy.” She nodded approval.

“Clever!” he shouted. “*Parole*, you find strange words—”

Susanna Moore's

"But hot," she interrupted. "And you can't cover the rest either," she went on, opening the throat of her gown. "I'm too hot, and I think I'll try to sleep away my headache."

"Headache—you have a headache!" he cried in tones not of sympathy, but of jubilation. "Poor, poor angel—let me take care of you. Let me—Where is the cologne—let me see, let me see—" He ran around the large room.

"It's on the shelf in the bathroom, I suppose." And Susanna realized that she had made a tactical mistake; that the heat had been adequate and the headache was supererogatory and should have been reserved for some really desperate contingency. . . . Yet, she consoled herself, there existed other complaints in profusion whose presence or absence was no more evident to the naked eye than a headache's. Neuritis, for instance, or earache. She would think up the rest when he was gone.

The cologne was found. "I have it, I have it!" he shouted, banging the door hard in his triumph. And "Pauvrette," he cried happily as he bathed her brow, "who was an unfaithful woman with a past and earrings, of whom I was afraid and jealous,—now a pauvre gosse with a headache!"

Susanna smiled and sighed. . . . If only he were always like this, inventive and amusing. . . . But, she worried, how could she force him to remain so, since after all she could not spend the rest of their time together being hot and having illnesses. . . .

She sighed again. Evidently it was imperative to make another effort,—another plunge into purpose. . . . This was the opportunity that must be grasped . . . it was imperative. . . .

And gathering herself together, and opening her eyes heavenward she improvised:

"You have such a charming imagination, Pol,—it is that which made me fall in love with you. When you use it in making art, then you are the great painter that you are; and when you use it in making love then you are irresistibly charming, Grodz." "Grodz" she thought quite an inspiration, although "Grodz" was at this moment eying her with some sentiment compounded of gratification and suspicion.

"It makes of you," she pursued, "a lover witty—delicate—subtle—inventive—accomplished," and she enumerated his points by lifting the fingers of his hand one by one, gingerly, with two of her own. "It makes you unique among men . . . among the mass

Love Days

of men, who rarely are great artists, let alone clever—observing—thinking—witty—lovers,” (same finger play), “but just starving, burning creatures, dulled by their appetites.” And Susanna was rather pleased with her own inventive powers.

“Mon Dieu,” Pol broke out at length, “and how do you know that, I should like to know?” His face was distorted by the pangs, not of jealousy, but of uncertainty. “Parole—I have asked myself many a time whether you are as innocent as I thought—you, who look and seem like a child, and then know so much— What does it all mean, je me demande—what does it mean?”

Susanna raised herself slightly. “Support me, my dear; it’s so hot,” she remembered to say. “And listen, mon beau Pol—” she placed her hand on his worried forehead where the golden hair grew so beautifully. “You are my only love. Yours is the only love I have ever accepted, and I fell in love with you because you were so different from all the others whose passion I divined and recoiled from. Because I felt, I knew, that it was only the imaginative love of a great artist,—the fine æsthetic love of the artist that could little by little teach mine to be equal to itself. . . . I understand myself,” Susanna continued to lie, “I’m made that way. . . . I’m slow—slow like a snail, my Pol, and if you hurry me you will destroy me and my house—my house being my qualities and charms.” She dimpled and smiled. “And I want you to bring me to flower in love, you know,—but slowly and sweetly, as you can; for you are sensitive and delicate: you are always the great artist. . . . Whereas those others,” she hurried on, wondering to whom she really referred, “—every one but you me degoutte, mon charmant Pol, and you enchant me when you are as you are now, tender and—”

She had intended going on, but her intuition told her that even the enumeration of adjectives might be overdone, and that something had perhaps better be left to his imagination. And she was really quite exhausted by purposive action, and it really was disgustingly hot. So she fell back on the cushions with his hand under her cheek, feeling that she had so far done pretty well, all things considered.

She received the confirmatory evidence as Pol kissed her lightly. “Thank you, my dear, you are adorable,” he said without enthusiasm. “Let me moisten your forehead again,” he added more

Susanna Moore's

contentedly, "and then I shall leave you and run up to the town, as you say. And shall I get a strand umbrella, in case we stay?"

"A strand umbrella?" Susanna repeated blankly.

"This morning you said you would like to have one."

The realities of the morning came back to Susanna as comes an automobile toot from the street into the serenity of a moonlit mediaeval garden in the theatre. . . . Pol saw her flush and frown.

"I forgot for the moment that you are suffering, pauvre ange," he hastened to say. "Never mind . . . Rest. Sleep. Dream. Think of nothing until I return. Au revoir, my angel, à bientôt!"

"Au revoir, mon cher."

"A tout à l'heure!"

"A tout à l'heure!"

"Pense à moi, mon ange!"

When he was gone Susanna rose at once to see what the weather looked like, and at the window she saw Pol traversing the portion of road visible from there. It was still breathlessly hot and sultry, yet he walked through the sunlight quickly, impervious to the temperature,—a salamander. And Susanna's appreciation had a moment of revival. He was indeed like a salamander, she thought, sleek and slippery and golden and cool; his vitality resisted all the elements. . . .

She walked away from the hot window, back into the shadows, and seated herself before the mirror.

What next, Susanna? she questioned herself languidly. She was now in reality beginning to feel extinguished by the heat; beginning to develop another headache. Although the frightful spiritual malaise that had preceded the revelation of her trouble had passed with enlightenment, and the sharp pain of the realization of her failure had passed with the belief she held that she could turn it into success,—the disease itself remained, and the methods she was using to cure it overwhelmed her with distaste.

Am I to become a comedian? she asked herself. Am I to fool a sincere and intelligent man? . . . And unless I do fool him, I shall wound him, who loves me. . . . And how was she going to endure being continually nursed by him; would it be less deadening than being made love to continually. . . . Why was he always the same? . . . And if he had to be, why wasn't she as well? . . . Given two and four, and both remaining two and

Love Days

four, the relationship remained what it was. Since she, however, couldn't help shrinking, had shrunk, as it were, from two to one, he too must shrink, shrink to two; and then the relation would still be the same. Susanna smiled a little. Obviously it was her task to shrink him from four to two then, to turn him gently into something less intrusive. And she had already begun, and there could be no doubt that if she persisted she must succeed. . . . But at what a cost! At what a cost of effort and boredom. . . . What a circuitous route to take to bring about results which could so easily be achieved by him, if he just kept on doing what he was now doing,—namely absenting himself. For a month or two. Surely after that she would be rapturously happy to have him back again,—for a while. . . .

Susanna pulled herself together and away from her mood which, she felt, was side-stepping into burlesque.— He loves me faithfully, and I love him less; I am unfaithful to my love, she reminded herself as she stared at her image in the mirror and saw her dazed and puzzled face. And why should she not look puzzled? Was it not in truth incredibly astonishing to find herself—after the preparation that life had given her, after all her unhesitating rejections for the sake of love, for the sake of her respect for love and her belief in love,—so easily tired of love. . . . To find that she could not be faithful to love. . . . without even a sense of guilt. For certainly she did not feel guilty towards love, nor indeed towards him who loved her faithfully. On the contrary—in spite of the facts—as far as sentiment went the guilt settled elsewhere. . . .

Susanna gave it up—this analytic phase that congested her head—, and she lay down again. She felt less optimistic now, and not at all exalted; but she still was resolved; she still believed in herself. . . . And she felt hot and tired, and saturated with boredom.

How wonderful, though, it felt to be tired and sleepy. . . . How sleep approached like a marvellous, unfathomed, bottomless love . . . an absorbing annihilating love. . . .

Susanna awoke with a start, and sat up quickly,—bewildered.

The room was pitch black, as in the dead of night, before a horrid rattling clash and a flash of streaked lightning illuminated the room and her.

Susanna Moore's

Her first thought was for herself who hated and feared electric storms. She jumped up quickly and slammed the windows closed before the next crash came, which she received like a blow, with her head buried in the pillows of her bed. She remembered Pol; but he, surely, did not mind storms, and no doubt he was safe in some place in the town. . . . She had no idea what time it was, and it did not trouble her. . . . Nothing troubled her but the actual mutterings and rumblings and roarings and flashings of the air, which always vibrated right into her and through her, and galvanized her into a strange palpitating mass in a manner so physically overpowering that she could no longer function in any other way. She rose and sank in vitality in inverse ratio to the storm, as it were; reduced to a state of tension before enduring the flashes and crashes, and slightly relieved immediately after, and quivering violently during the storm's entire course without full consciousness of her condition. Chiefly she had a horrid sense of being alone in the universe with an ineluctable tyrant.—Whoever had seen her behaviour had called her a weather neurotic, a diagnosis she accepted. And the subject had no further interest for her, since her condition was invariably the same, and passed completely with the passage of the storm.

She barely heard Pol enter.

"Suzette," he called, "where are you?"

She made some vague sound.

He rushed to the bed, and feeling for her, felt her trembling body, and clapped his arms about her, a little tender, and more than a little triumphant. "You are afraid, poor child, poor Suzette, I should never have left you—" and so forth and so on.

Susanna was incapable of speaking and of hearing, but she felt his arms around her, and if they stabilized her only a little, as an anchor does a ship on the tossing sea, that little was just so much comfort, and he was its source. And she held tight to her anchor, although she did not distinguish a word of all that he poured in on her; while the ugly storm continued to play loud and black and gold about them. . . . Until the silver sheets of rain that descended exhausted it locally, and it passed on, muttering, to fresh pastures of sky.

Susanna quieted in tempo with the heavens, and with them was finally completely restored to repose.— She began to thank Pol, rubbing her cheek to his, while she attempted to excuse and ex-

Love Days

plain her weakness. He, however, arrested her; and it became apparent that he placed this unknown frailty in the category of gratifying charms for which explanations are superfluous, and excuses a little mad. So Susanna had to content herself with ordering him to get up and open the windows.

The change was tremendous. Waves of fresh grey air blew into the room, which for the first time today grew light.— One was now no longer exclusively in Italy,—one might be in Versailles, or Aix-les-Bains, or Brighton. . . . Susanna who was in a moment revitalized with deep breaths of this new cold air,—this air, bracing like an elixir, she thought,—joined Pol at the window. And here,—at once—one was back again at Capri. . . . Their sand beach was now quite yellow against the angry little grey and white foamy waves that splashed in on it, and the olives were greener and fresher than before, while the beaten down poppies had become blood red spots in the waving grass.

They stood together in the breeze of the window. From animatedly tender Grodz became animatedly entertaining as he related his experiences of the afternoon. Susanna was most astonished to hear that the afternoon was finished, that it was after six o'clock. . . . She must have slept for hours. . . .

"Are these enough trains to suit you, Madame?" he cried, and showed her long lists he had jotted down;—trains to Florence and Vallombrosa, to Milan and Switzerland, to Brindisi for Greece.

"I should like to take them all at once," she mumbled.

He next described a look-in at the Café Hidigeigei; its occupants, and in especial a couple with whom he had struck up an acquaintance and taken coffee. The man was a painter, and the wife an actress, Austrians or Hungarians, he thought. He described them in detail; he mimicked the husband:—they seemed to amuse him hugely.

"You will see, you will see for yourself! I have made an appointment to meet them on the Piazza after dinner. In case it clears there is to be a great concert. It is a festa of some kind,—I believe patriotic—. It will be great fun! They will amuse you!"

Susanna demurred inwardly. Not about going to the Piazza, which she had several times done with moderate enjoyment, but about spending the evening with a couple, who, whatever Pol's intention had been, he had made sound too awful— Yet it would

Susanna Moore's

not do to derail Pol's interest when it ran in the right direction,—namely outward; outward, away from her. So she assented readily, and Pol ran downstairs at once to arrange for a vettura to call for them after dinner.

When he returned, Susanna asked to see the morning's sketch. He took the sheet from the portfolio at once, and held it at the window for inspection;—affably if unenthusiastically. But Susanna provided the enthusiasm, for she found it enchanting. The pale grey wash gave the roundness and smoothness of polished stone to her body that floated; to the scarf that floated; to the waves that floated. . . . Nothing was more than indicated, yet what was there was enough to give a rhythm to the composition that rippled through it like—like musical water, Susanna thought. . . . Her physical charm and his were here united. . . . She flushed with delight. She grasped the creator's hand impulsively: "It's simply wonderful and lovely."

"Pas mal," he agreed. "And when I paint it, and life-size, you will see, you will see." He explained his intentions to her at length, absorbed in his interest, and delightfully unconscious of her for the moment.

Susanna leaned against the wall contemplating his work with bright starry eyes, a little as she had stood the day she had first visited him in his studio, and a little differently. For as she now spoke she too was insensible of him in a personal way, as well as of herself. She was thinking quite objectively,—her power to receive mental impressions happily restored to her.

"Have you never thought of sculpting, Pol?"

"No," he answered unhesitatingly. "No. I am a painter. It is not only that I adore colour, and that I would not be willing to limit myself—that I must play with light and space as well as with material, and with *all* material objects,—but it seems to me that what sculpture does explicitly may be implicit in painting—if one knows how to put it there. The essential thing: form. And since in sculpture one only uses the eyes, as in painting—and not the hands to touch, except the sculptor himself, who uses them as instruments,—since the manner of apprehending form is the same, I do not see why the painter cannot give what the sculptor gives, if he wishes to."

"Pol, Pol," Susanna cried, excited, "how stupid I have been.

Love Days

That is exactly what you do do. Why didn't you put me on the right track before?" She squeezed his hand and then held it. "Of course I felt it when I asked you about sculpting; but now I see it. You, like the sculptor, give a tactile impression to the eye; you make the eye act like the skin; you make the eye really do what a figure of speech describes: caress. Your marvellous smooth curves do it, I suppose. For when I look at your things I feel a much more direct contact with reality than can be got through sight. Or perhaps I ought to say the reality seems more simple and concentrated. Yes, that is it: you give through visual impressions the concentrated reality of touch more intensely and completely than touch alone can give it, because touch is slower in its procedure and more serial than sight. That's the miracle you perform!" Susanna laughed the pleased and surprised laugh with which she welcomed ideas she liked as they came to her. "On your surfaces," she continued, "the eye melts into the sense of touch and all the matter you present—sky and water and sand and trees and figures—everything has melted into material for the sense of touch, so sensitized, so stimulated by your form that it brings to the intellect something that seems more real than matter, something that—" Susanna wondered whether she was becoming Bergsonian,—“something that in its directness feels like the rhythm of the underlying reality itself.”

She turned to Pol who had listened to her attentively, yet impatiently and with frowning displeasure, that would have been apparent to her before had she been aware of him.

She laughed. "You don't like my theorizing! I can't imagine why. Do tell me! Don't you think I understand your work at all?"

"If you like it you understand it. But that suffices. All this theorizing we should leave to the critics who are paid for their words and to whom no one listens. I know that you are intelligent without any such proofs!"

Susanna burst into a new laugh. "You'd rather have it that way,—take it on faith. . . . But it amuses me to theorize, that's why I do it. I like to do the things I like to do, and I wish you would try a little to like the things I like," she added pointedly. "I try to like yours: I'm going out with you to meet your friends tonight, just to please you.—What shall I wear?" she asked, outwardly gay, but inwardly again overthrown and dejected.

Susanna Moore's

"Let us see, let us see!" He ran her into the closet in the bedroom. "And don't think, angel, that I am indifferent to your opinion of my work. But you like it, and that satisfies me; all the rest is a waste of time, parole, and you could make much better use of the energy you employ in your complicated thoughts about touch and sight and melting and *que sais-je*, in melting to me, and touching and caressing me, and letting me love you and teach you what is more intense than reality—" He had raised his voice and was now treating her to his immobile love pose.

"Ridiculous," Susanna drawled indifferently. "One doesn't exclude the other.— How will this do—or this—" and she pulled dresses out pell-mell, wondering whether the chambermaid would hang them up again. She knew *she* wouldn't. . . . She began to miss her maid.

After a good deal of discussion, interested on Pol's part, it was agreed that she should wear a chinese-red gown embroidered in silver, a silver turban, and a chinchilla scarf; articles that Susanna had long ago decided to wear if the weather cleared.

The weather cleared beautifully, and they left after eight o'clock under a gorgeous blue sky with magnificent clouds sailing through it, coloured by a resplendent sunset, which they divined rather than saw as they drove slowly up to the town through the olive and ilex and oak fringed road. They traversed the little town of houses rosy and silent in the dying sun, and only when they emerged on the promenade beyond the Piazza, high up and overhanging the broad orchards that led down to the Marina Grande did they get the full and splendid view of the flame and pink and seagreens of sky and water and land: Sorrentian peninsula, and Vesuvius, and Naples.

Pol and Susanna, together with hundreds of spectators, hung over the balustrade, and watched the glow grow, and then fade; and twilight mount from the land, and spread over sea and sky, pursued by night. They themselves were spots of colour in the dying light; Pol gold and grey, Susanna flaming red and silver. Passers-by saw two young and beautiful creatures in sympathetic converse; the gold and grey one gesticulating vigorously and precisely to the red and silver languid one.

And Grodz was, as a matter of fact, at his best, or rather at Susanna's best. He was talking about colour in nature and in

Love Days

art; he was talking about his own colour which she found so exciting and yet so profoundly satisfying. . . . And added to the intellectual expansiveness of his mood which pleased her so greatly, there was the charm of the veiled light of approaching night playing about his golden head, and bestowing on it a pale glow that spiritualized it into mystic beauty—: that changed him into another.— How wonderful it would be, if only they did not belong to each other in this incredible way; if they flashed across one another's orbits occasionally; on occasions like this; under rare and beautiful circumstances. . . .

It was quite dark—deep blue with twinkling stars, for the moon had not yet risen—when the orchestra in the adjoining Piazza struck up the overture of Aida.

The lamps of the promenade were now lighted, and it was possible to distinguish in the passers-by examples of most of the nations of Europe, and to hear snatches of all languages. The majority of the tourists were commonplace and bourgeois; large and fat when German, large and flat when English, small and pinched when French, and small and round when native. But there were enough exceptions, odd, handsome or picturesque, to give the crowd an individual flavour; one that one afterwards remembered as the Capri flavour.

The Piazza which Pol and Susanna entered to the strains of Aida, formed a marvellous background, made of its scene a marvellous picture. Chinese lanterns, great numbers of them, were strung from the music rotunda in its centre to the trees flanking the flagged paths that ran parallel to its edges and diagonally across it. The surrounding houses shone shadowed-white in the light of the lamps and lanterns. The large church that stood on the side where the square abutted into the promenade had a broad flight of white steps for approach, and was so simple in line and was washed so ghostly white that it gave to the scene the appearance of a modern stage set.

A leisurely crowd strolling about and listening to the music filled the square. Ice-cream stands in its corners, lighted dramatically by torches, were surrounded by knots of excited native children and their grown-up relatives. Dwarfs threaded their subterranean way through the crowd in the dark. Two separate and unconnected John the Baptists strode about, finely unabashed,

Susanna Moore's

—long-robed, sandalled, bearded; one young, and garbed in white; the other older, garbed in brown: unconscious of one another and unconscious of their rivals, the monks.

And the orchestra in the rotunda, composed of male citizens of from seven to seventy years of age, sent a vigorous din of melody into the fine night.

Susanna was keenly, pleasantly aware of the physical animation of the scene, and was aware of more—: of an undercurrent of those spiritual conflicts that give direction to the movement of life. There were the reincarnated saints;—there were the realistic fat priests so happily at home in the world as it was;—and the more austere monks;—and the ascetic and bloodless clergy of the north;—and there were the careless artists whom she recognized as painters of caves and rocks. And there was a group described as sun-worshippers driven from police-ridden towns; and on the steps of the church, partly in the deep shadows and partly in the bright whiteness, was seated another group of men, bloused and belted Russians, disciples of Gorki, who himself sat among them, large and leonine. And like the soil from which seeds sprout—flat and uniform and unremarkable,—there was the undifferentiated mass of proletariat and bourgeoisie. And all of these elements welded for the time being into some kind of a unified whole by the loud and luscious strains of *Aïda*.

Susanna thought to feel the concentrated essence of the variety of life in this assemblage. It drew her to itself magnetically, drained from her the consciousness of her dejection and her pain, and restored her to happy objectivity. . . . For a peaceful half hour she forgot not only Pol, but herself as well.

After the music of *Aïda*, culled with great thoroughness from the four acts, had ceased, Susanna and Pol, returning to the promenade, met Pol's couple, with several other persons to whom they had attached themselves.

They stood together in a knot, while Pol and the Hungarian lady accomplished the introductions. Accomplished them very emphatically and noisily, Susanna thought, as the knot unravelled and Pol walked on ahead with the Hungarian, while she followed with the other lady, three men bringing up the rear.

Love Days

Susanna's lady, to whom she took an immediate fancy, proved to be a painter and a Parisian;—a tawny haired, pale skinned, thin young woman, who spoke English fluently and well in a high-pitched birdlike twittering voice, which amused Susanna greatly. She chatted about the rest of the party.

"If you turn around you will see, actually see, my husband talking politics," she said, "as if he were doing it for the first time, with the frenzy of a recent convert, to that poor Ewart, who takes no interest whatever. He is quite mad, his form of socialism is quite mad, he is doing his best to make me quite mad,—I who wish to be left alone to paint or to choose my own form of madness."

"Does he know Gorki? He's sitting on the church-steps on the Piazza now," Susanna put in.

"Oh yes, he knows him. But he does not wish to hear Gorki talk, he wishes to talk himself. What he is out for is converts, so beware!"

Susanna, on hearing her companion's name found that she knew both husband and wife by reputation; Juan Rivière as one of the founders and leaders of the Cubist school, and Lucille Chapu as a painter less radical but more personal. They of course knew of Grodz. She found too that they had many friends in common, and her pleasure at finding Pierre among them was keen. They spoke of him, and in his power of charming them into affection they experienced a strengthening of their sympathy for one another.

"Is he in France?" Susanna asked, blushing with pleased expectation at the prospect of seeing him again.

"I think not, but Rivière would know—" Lucille replied.

"He might be induced to come to Capri," Susanna said, and she pictured his coming as a cooling softly prickling rain on parched land. But it transpired that the Rivières were on their way back to Paris from Sicily where they had spent the spring and summer painting. And it came to Susanna with the immediacy and the certainty of a revelation that Paris was the solution of her problem. . . . They too would go to Paris, and lose themselves in the movement and complexity of a great city's life,—of which the last hour was so pleasant a suggestion. . . .

Susanna breathed with relief: here was a definite prospect restored to her, and one promising to her hopes.

Susanna Moore's

They reached the Café Hidigeigei to which the Hungarian and Pol led the party with so much enthusiasm that Susanna's objections remained unvoiced.

They were given a large round table in the centre of the noisy and smoky room. Susanna was now flooded by memories of her winter in Berlin. Not only the place, the people and their language, evoked Berlin, but the Hungarian did so superlatively, when Susanna gave her an attentive inspection. Berlin at its most unattractive. For, noting her vulgar lively face with flashing black eyes and her frizzled hair and the piquant smile of her common mouth and her stout figure tightly corseted, Susanna thought to recognize in her a type common to the Berlin waitress and Variété actress. She probably was the latter,—she looked clever enough, as she smiled and sparkled for Pol, who was drawing things for her on the table-cloth and commenting animatedly.

Susanna, observing her, began to feel a certain uneasiness in her mere presence, as though through physical nearness she might reflect on Pol and besmirch him. She seemed already to have coloured off on her husband, Susanna thought,—a slovenly intellectual, who was creating a new style for sculpture but lacked all style and manner in his person. Thinking was reputed to be his strong point, and quite apparently he did not engage in thinking in public; in public he confined his mental activity to commenting loudly in bad French on the things surrounding him. When Rivière endeavored to draw him into a discussion, he made it apparent that he was unwilling to be drawn into anything; that when he got into connection with a subject, so to speak, it was by nobody's aid or abetting, but only because he happened at the moment to be divinely inflated by the subject and ready for deflation.— Susanna thought it odd and extremely regrettable that these two persons were at the table.

As for Lucille Chapu, the light confirmed the impression Susanna had received. She was indeed charming; subtle, and of exquisite breeding. And her mad husband, who looked like an intellectual bullfighter of the Basque country, certainly he had the fervour and the flavour of a missionary, Susanna agreed, as she let him expatiate on his favourite subjects. And she liked his earnestness and enthusiasm, and his intrepid desire to convert, and admired his disinterested devotion to ideas for their own sake,

Love Days

—or not perhaps ideas so much as ideals of behaviour. He seemed indeed to know how he wanted men to govern, and to write, and to paint—did he, she wondered, know, too, how he wanted them to *be*? She admired him: his selflessness, and the genuineness of his spirit, but she soon knew that she did not share his philosophy. She accepted him personally and argued with him politely if not interestedly,—but she rejected his radical subjectivism and the tyrannical methods of achieving it, which, jesuitically, he sponsored.

After what seemed a long time the supper arrived.

Susanna would have nothing in spite of Pol's entreaties that took on the tone of commands as they proved vain. As though her capacity for putting away food were a glory she was maliciously hiding, the while he was trying to exhibit it, Susanna thought. . . .

"My headache you know," she was finally obliged to remark, against the dictates of her taste.

"I have a headache powder in my pocket; won't you have it? I have quite a supply with me, they're excellent," came in perfect American from the man on her other side, of whom she had previously noticed only that he had an unusual and interesting appearance and an English name.

Susanna turned to him quickly, with shining eyes pulled wide open.

"What a charming surprise—to hear American! I think I haven't heard a word before this since leaving New York in May. . . . It's like bathing one's face in real water after alcohol and cold-cream makeshifts." They laughed. "Or like finding some one who dances the waltz when you dance the waltz, instead of the onestep, or the—" her eye alighted on Pol and the Hungarian in hilarious converse, "or the polka," she ended, smiling at her neighbour apologetically. "Anyway it is a pleasure, and one that you can give me without any trouble, Mr. Ewart. Your name is English—I had taken for granted that you were English, though now that I look at you I don't see how I could have."

"My name is English, and my father was; but strangely I feel and I think I am entirely American.— I knew that you were American the moment I saw you: American brought up in Europe. . . . But how about this powder? I can promise you that it will cure your headache in ten minutes."

Susanna Moore's

He bent his head towards her.— She had before noticed that he was tall and slim and fair, with thick reddish golden hair brushed back from a dome-like forehead, but she now saw that through some strange asymmetry his eyes became extraordinarily searching when focused, and that he seemed obliged to give his head a twist downward and sideways to get them focused, and that this gesture lent to his position of attention a degree of emphasis very flattering to its object.— She decided that he looked like a smart twenty year old lounge lizard, and like a forty year old scientist, and she was pleasantly intrigued by the unresolved combination he presented.

"I haven't a headache really; I have a headache of convenience," she said, carried away to confidence by this taste of easy fluid casual intercourse. "When I was a child and didn't want to be kissed, I had colds, and when I didn't want to walk up hills, I had backache. I had more serious illnesses in Berlin when I wanted to get rid of people. Most people recognize physical incapacity, you know, but not moral incapacity."

"Moral incapacity to eat scrambled eggs and things?" he inquired mildly.

"Why not?" But Susanna changed the subject. "Tell me how you come to be here with these people," she asked, suddenly shocked by the idea that he might be a friend of Pol's couple.

"Quite by chance. I was picked up by Rivière as an audience, I suppose, and I found that we have friends in common in Paris where I'm going, so I'm travelling there with them."

"I'm going too," Susanna stated.

"Are you?" he responded pleasantly, "that's nice."

"Oh thank you," Susanna smiled her most delicious smile, her mouth slightly opened and her lips curling up from her pretty teeth. "I think you mean it."

"Of course I do. I feel just as you do about meeting with some American atmosphere; I've been over here myself for over five months, and I'm dead tired of making linguistic efforts and experiments. I hope we shall arrange to travel together."

Susanna, who found this cool and friendly young man's reasons for wanting to travel with her astonishingly and yet pleasantly unflattering, inquired about their plans. They were, she learned, to spend a day in Rome, and take the Rome-Paris express on. . . .

Love Days

"Is the Hungarian couple going too?"

"I believe so.— But not with me—that's positive," he added; "quite positive."

Susanna laughed; she was pleased, because beneath his mildness she thought to hear a note of hard definiteness: a sign of strength.

She asked him about himself;—what he wrote. He told her, and she then remembered to have seen one or two of his comedies. She was again pleased that he was a writer and a wit . . . The course of acquaintance with a writer—a talent more widely distributed, with an outlook more expansive and realistic than a painter's—now seemed to her a seductive process of gradual revelation. Such a man, she decided, might be discovered and uncovered at a thousand points, little by little, instead of being viewed all at once in some one great burst of achievement,—or not at all . . . And, although she knew but little about his work and nothing about him, Susanna, in the relief and comfort that came to her in his friendly and personal, yet objectively cool atmosphere, concluded that literary expression was the only form of art that reflected its interest back on its creator.

She expanded this thought and presented it to Ewart. Did he not agree that literary expression was only a conscious expansion of the artist's mental and temperamental proclivities,—that all that was in him as poet was in him factually as person. . . . Whereas other artists, musicians and sculptors, for instance, performed subconsciously some union of intuitions that existed in them as persons only separately . . . latently . . . impotently. . . ?

Ewart was interested, but he expressed no opinion;—as though his interest covered Susanna's views on the subject, but not the subject itself. And Susanna, a shade disappointed in his response, pursued it in her own mind, while Ewart was engaged by his other neighbour, Mme. Rivière; while Rivière again took advantage of the opportunity to pour talk into her inattentive ears; while Pol was unfalteringly devoting himself to the frizzy one with the golden looped earrings and the silent, eating husband; while, all around, people were talking and eating and smoking and disappearing behind beer-jugs and newspapers, and reappearing; while the concert of many-languaged voices mingled into an encompassing sea of sound with ebb and tide.

Susanna Moore's

Susanna felt comfortable enough in this Babel; safely whole and herself as it were, seated between men who both, in their different ways, looked, as far as they looked for anything from her, for intellectual sympathy, for understanding. And she felt more than a vague sympathy for Ewart; she felt what she thought might be called his psychological charm.

When Ewart turned to Susanna once more he overheard her breaking in languidly on the voluble Rivière: "Perhaps every one ought to work, if you can prove that the work they ought to do is work that ought to be done. . . . I don't see however that this is a moral universe that can demand moral service from the individual; that is why our very notion of morality includes voluntariness." She noticed Ewart's return. "I'll ask Mr. Ewart what he thinks."

"Don't ask me to moralize in French," he said. "I can't."

"Neither can I. I don't enjoy moralizing at all: I'm too stupid or too lazy or too young to have arranged my tastes and preferences in a scheme."

"Or too healthy, or too fortunate," he amended.

Susanna looked into his interesting, crooked eyes inquiringly.

"Mine?" he asked.

She nodded, smiling.

"I am neither too healthy nor too fortunate nor young to moralize, but simply too cynical. By the time you are ready, when the obstacles of youth and health will have been overcome, you'll probably be the same." He looked at her inquiringly.

"Cynical? . . . not unless it's inevitable. . . . Because— It's not that I am insensitive to good and evil—I recognize them occasionally in life, as I recognize beauty and ugliness constantly. . . . But I don't have to systematize beauty and ugliness to feel certainty about them:—they contain no intellectual element, I mean; whereas goodness and badness do, and that is where it becomes difficult for me. I put it badly, but you see what I mean—" And if she was not enlightening Ewart, she was at least clarifying her own mind, she felt. "I mean that I am not skeptical about goodness. Although I am less sensitive to it than to beauty I do get it sometimes, and in the same immediate and certain way . . . But Rivière's duty and 'ought' involve a whole system

Love Days

of values one gets through the intellect if one gets them at all. . . . I may some day; I hope I shall. . . . I don't want to die before I've had many kinds of experience."

Ewart regarded Susanna quizzically, and laughed. His laugh was nice, he had unexpectedly delicate white teeth. "I have never thought of a moral creed as a sensation to be experienced for the sake of the fulness of life . . . but you may be right . . . let's keep one another posted on how it feels—"

But Susanna was being called at by her husband, whose lady was smoking a cigar and listening to Rivière under internal protest. "Will you have a cigarette, chérie?" he was calling. And when Susanna finally heard him and refused, he added: "Mon Dieu, how absorbed you are, what you are speaking of must be very interesting!"

"We're discussing the trip to Paris. Every one here is going there, so I thought we might as well go to."

As this was in French the entire table caught it, and received it with varying degrees of interest and delight,—the latter sentiment reaching its climax in the Hungarian lady's vociferous enthusiasm expressed to Grodz exclusively: "Ach, mais ça tombe bien, c'est une surprise charmante," and so weiter.

Grodz himself was for once silent, while his conflicting sentiments played over his face in sharp darting glances at his wife, Ewart and the Rivières, and gratified smiles of welcome to Mme. Blavititch's flatteries.

The conversation became general in regard to the trip. The Blavititches could not leave for three days owing to a business engagement, and they tried hard to persuade the others to wait for them. It came to light however that Mr. Ewart too had an important business appointment in Paris which would oblige him to leave Capri the next day or the day after at the latest. He clinched the discussion by offering to engage a coupé for himself, the Grodzes and the Rivières, on one of these two days, if they wished.

Susanna was all for leaving on the afternoon of the following day, spending the night and the next day in Rome and going on to Paris on the night express. "We must have a day in Rome," she said with shining eyes. But Pol was all for waiting. "Who will pack for you in such a hurry?" he objected.

"We'll throw everything in, and have a maid in Paris to take

Susanna Moore's

it all out in order," she replied, with happy anticipatory smiles. "A maid, and a real bath, and a shampoo, and a manicure, and perhaps a horse and a dog," she continued under her breath to Ewart. "Everything in the Parisian code except a lover, and instead of him, I'll have you occasionally, shall I?"

Ewart scrutinized Susanna's expression quizzically;—it was sweet, mildly amused but ingenuous. He smiled nicely. "I'll try to fit in with the manicure and the horse and dog."

Pol was shouting something about a change of plans—Vallombrosa—Greece. Ewart heard him. "Were you thinking of Greece? I've been wanting to go there for some time. But I fancy one must go with some one who is thoroughly prepared, to get the maximum of enjoyment out of it."

"Yes, but as Greek is my specialty and Grodz is partly Greek and more interested in Greek art than in any other, strange to say,—I suppose we are prepared. But," she added, "it's too late in the season and too early in the next."

"Oh yes," he rejoined, "I met some people who have just come from there, and they say the heat is unbearable even for New Yorkers. In what sense is your specialty Greek?"

Susanna explained, and the Rivières coming into the conversation and hearing Susanna's own name, now placed and identified her as one of whom they had often heard from friends returning from New York. "How awfully stupid of me not to have known!" Lucille said, staring a little at Susanna. "My only excuse is that I had not heard of your marriage. . . ."

Apartments and studios were presently discussed; parties were arranged; at the Rivières', at Robinson, on the Seine; a short trip to Brittany was suggested. . . .

Susanna found herself excited and encouraged by the prospect of activity among new scenes and new people . . . new people. . . . And suddenly she realized that she wished to see none of her old friends. Even the prospect of meeting her dear Pierre depressed her strangely—she felt him now suddenly as a creature who met demands as little as he made them. She was relieved to hear upon inquiry that he was passing the summer with friends near New York. She felt suddenly that from him and all the other of her former friends there emanated an ennui almost as deadening as that of her husband's inevitability. It was a stroke of fortune indeed to have met with these pleasant stran-

Love Days

gers. . . . Especially Ewart, whose cool and not too definite personality both rested and arrested her, since somewhere in its folds, so to say, there lay the subtlety, wit, and sophistication that informed his work; lay there to be unfolded for her,—and perhaps by her. . . .

The party broke up and left the still crowded café. Susanna could not be persuaded to promenade any more in the now deliciously silent moon-filled streets. Nor would she consent to walk home through the moonlit ilex groves, although the whole company offered to escort her. She obstinately insisted in driving home at once to pack, which in truth she regarded as an undertaking only less stupendous than unpacking. Unpacking indeed paralysed her to such a degree that Pol was obliged to do it all, while she contrived that some important errand should take her from the room. And since Pol was charmed by signs of helplessness, this arrangement had so far worked out perfectly.

A vettura was got from somewhere by the resourceful and energetic Pol. Farewells and *au revoir*s were said, and Pol and Susanna drove off.— Drove off, alone again, with the rhythm of the horses' hoofs beating on the hard road, and the moonshine and shadows playing on it, and mysterious silvery trees swaying in the night breeze as they ran languidly and silently by. Susanna drew her fur about her and shivered a little.

"What is it? Are you cold, *frileuse* that you are, my child?" Pol put his arms around her shoulders protectingly.

"It's very pleasant to be too cold after that stuffy café. I dislike the place so much that I'm surprised I enjoyed the party. They're charming,—the *Rivières* and Ewart, aren't they?"

"And *Mme. Blavitch*! How amusing to see that idiot of a husband, who talks about a new movement in art, and eats, and eats, and talks about a new movement in art; while his wife flirts, and talks of love, and talks of love, and flirts." He laughed a little, and then watched Susanna.

"I hadn't thought of her as saying things. . . . So she must of course, when she uses her Hungarian Berlin French. I just thought of her as being common and having unfixed black hair, and a mean, nut-crackery mouth—when it's shut.— Isn't it a lovely, lovely night!"

"Ah non, there you are wrong!" Pol was crying. "*C'est une*
220

Susanna Moore's

belle femme—fine build, fine hips, fine eyes, expressive eyes—gay, like all the women of her country—with chien, beaucoup de chien—”

“You are joking, I know—”

“I am not; not at all. Parole, it seems to me that I as a painter must know whether or not she is a fine type of a woman! I believe that you only dislike her type—”

“You believe correctly,” Susanna laughed. “—Aren’t you excited about going to Paris—and so soon! We’ll have to stay up all night packing, I’m afraid. I’ll pack the valises and you’ll pack the trunks, like the dear that you are.” She giggled. “I feel so gay since I have Paris in my head. We’ll be gay in Paris, eh, Pol? You will take a big studio and paint me as Aphrodite Pelagias, and I shall work at the libraries, and in the late afternoons we’ll commence our revels!”

She chatted on and Pol kept silent for a time and then broke out: “All of a sudden it seems to me that you are very desirous of having parties and all that! Last week it was to be Greece, this morning Vallombrosa. I am still all for Greece, if there must be a change, where there are no parties, no Rivières, no Mister Ewart, no—”

Susanna laughed. “What a baby you are, Pol. In the first place there is the heat which we didn’t think of and which is greater there than even here; and in the second place you wouldn’t have much more of me in Greece than in Paris, for I should know every one excavating in Greece, and every one directing a school; and they would all know something, though only a little, about me. So there would be parties there too, and there you are,—and here we are.”

For they had arrived, and Pol only had time to exclaim excitedly: “And what does that mean again: not have much of you in Greece, not have much of you in Paris?” before he was obliged to jump from the carriage and settle with the driver.

Susanna entered the silent moonlit house and went softly upstairs to their apartment. Throwing off her hat and stole she looked around for the trunks hopefully. One was in the room, covered with a piece of material, but the others were outside in the hall. What a nuisance! She sat down on the sofa, discouraged.

Love Days

Pol entered.

"Pol, chéri," she greeted him, "the trunks are outside in the hall, isn't it a nuisance, what shall we do?"

"We shall go to bed!" he shouted, as he stood threateningly before her, then, feeling too distant, dropped on his knees. "I'm not going to pack tonight, it's almost midnight! What did you mean by 'have little of you in Paris?' I ask myself,—I ask you. What does that mean? Answer me!"

Susanna saw the worry beneath the wrath, and softened. She put her hands on his shoulders affectionately. "But, chéri," she said, "we shall both be working a part of the day, and we shall be seeing people and doing things. It won't be quite as it has been. Honeymoons always end sooner or later. They ought to end beautifully, like this one, in the height of their charm,—like a flower that is cut before it fades, so that you never know just when it would have faded, and—" she felt that she was giving out "and that is what I meant, dear," she ended lamely.

"You are a child, and do not know how cruel you are. But I will teach you yet," Grodz cried from behind his love-mask, "I will punish you yet. When I kiss you tonight."

"You are going to pack for me tonight;—you can kiss me in Paris." Susanna dropped her arms from his shoulders and prepared to shove him away and rise. But he caught her up, about to smother her in his embrace.

Holding him off as best she could, she cried: "You haven't even washed your mouth."

Arrested, he stared at her.

"After kissing that woman's hand, that Mme. Blavititch's hand with the granite rings. And you think I'll have that person's hand, part of that person's hand on my mouth! I'm ashamed of you, Pol, it seems to me that you're having a bad day today—" She seemed deeply annoyed.

Grodz had at first listened in amazement; gradually the light of understanding spread over his face.

"Parole!" he now screamed in happy excitement, "then she is capable of being jealous, this child, this angel, this hot and cold beauty, this person who—who—Bien, bien," he cried on the way to the bathroom, "I'll wash my mouth; I'll use a disinfectant; if necessary I'll send for the doctor . . ."

Susanna Moore's

Susanna heard him splashing his face; she laughed a little: he was droll and adroit.

When he came back, his golden skin shining like real gold, smooth like real gold, and his curling golden hair freshly brushed smooth, unconscious of his beauty and eager and happy, she let him kiss her, exacting only that in return he pack one trunk, the wardrobe trunk. The others, she allowed, might go until morning.

She carried her clothes to him from the closets and her lingerie from the drawers, accompanied by a disturbing feeling that she would have to fetch half the things out again for the trip. He packed them, badly enough, some with admiring comment, some with kisses.

"You have the air of kissing them good-bye," Susanna commented, and realizing her indiscretion, she added, "or au revoir, like Mme. Blavititch's hand!"

Pol, who had thrown her a sharp glance at the beginning of the sentence, smiled contentedly at the end. "Encore, encore," he murmured as he packed. "How unjust she is to that poor little woman with the husband who eats, and talks new art, and forgets she is there."

"I imagine it is she who does the forgetting," Susanna remarked. "But I don't care who does it or anything in that family. The point is that I wish to forget them, both of them, and if you talk about them any more, you will have to wash out the inside of your mouth as well if you want to use it in talking to me."

"Ah, cat," Pol shouted delightedly, turning about on his knees. "Jealous wild cat!" And he looked so exactly like one himself, one ready to spring, that Susanna hastened to call "You can pack the rest while I get ready for bed; I'm tired out," and rushed into the bathroom, slamming the door—to his continued delight.

She leaned out of the window and looked up, looked up at the decreasing moon that knew how to decrease so coolly and calmly in its silver radiance, and she strove to calm the perturbation of her soul. For now that she was alone she tasted to the full the flavour of her feeling; tasted annoyance, anger, resentment, indignation and disgust—disgust. Before, there had been all sorts of unhappy, even tragic streaks in this day . . . there had been a

Love Days

thick atmosphere of failure shot through by bolts of hot misery and despair. . . . But now, at the end of the dreadful day, disgust had entered together with that vulgar woman whom her beautiful husband, as it had slowly dawned upon her, admired,—really, incredible though it was, admired. . . . Her beautiful husband . . . her artist husband . . . her husband who loved her. . . .

And in her state of mental privacy all the day's thoughts and feelings awakened and came clanging in, bringing back the misery that had all but crushed her. And there was in this present mood something more, something new, something more threatening even than her failure to love him sufficiently; something which evaded her now, but which, she felt certain, with a heart that seemed to have grown too large for her breast, would in the end cease to threaten, would reveal itself for what it was:—a calamity.

She tried to fasten her thoughts on Paris. Paris was to be her salvation,—or was it her drug? Yet it proved an opaque thing to look into: the situation in Paris . . . And though she repeated and rehearsed her optimistic projects, they were strangely depleted of their optimistic influence, here, in the dead of night, with Grodz in the next room. . . .

And when, as a last resort for reassurance, Susanna repeated the refrain that during the day had heartened her, "he loves you more, you love him less," it had a hollow, an unconvincing sound.

She re-entered the room flushed and frowning under a burden of resentment and foreboding. It seemed to her now that she was fighting fate itself and that her only weapons were fortuitous things she had to steal, as best she could, from fate itself. And there was about this situation something unfair that drove the heat of indignation into her cheeks and her eyes.— But she was primed for fighting, nevertheless.

"Finished, finished," Pol sang out, as she got into bed. "Just finished! And now I'll put the light out. I shan't be more than ten minutes, my angel."

"Thank you. I don't care how long you are. I'm going to sleep. Goodnight."

"Angry still, my child; jealous still?" he carolled.

She did not answer; and seized by a sudden idea, he switched

Susanna Moore's

on the light again and standing over the bed, said: "As for that, have I objected to your Mr. Ewart, who has the mien of an elegant carrot, to whom you talked and talked, God knows of what—!"

"I didn't kiss his hand," Susanna threw out, punching her pillows in substitution to throwing them around as her inclination suggested. "And it was a nice long fastidious hand, like mine,—not a bony broad grasping—oh damn" She turned her back on Pol and pushed her head into her pillow to keep her temper down.

"You know very well that it is customary to kiss a lady's hand. But is it customary, I should like to know," he cried, "to smile and talk and make pretty faces and go to Paris suddenly with the first man one meets on one's wedding trip? It is not for you to be jealous, parole!" He had worked himself up to a great pitch, glowering down at Susanna who was still turned from him, insolently, as he thought. "I begin to think that you are playing comedy with me—to put me off the scent, parole! But I am no longer deceived, do you hear? And when I consider that you announce to that type, before every one, that we are going to Paris!—Without a doubt they are all laughing at me—the husband of a wife who takes him to Paris suddenly without consulting him!—Very well," he shouted at her, dropping on his knees for efficiency, "they will see who is master here. I shall not go to Paris!"

Susanna turned about on her elbow slowly, stunned for the second time today. But only momentarily. For, looking into Pol's angry face but a foot away from her own, she realized in a flash that all she would have to do to paralyse it into calm and melt it into peace, was to make a gesture of submissive passion—this was all that at bottom he was worried about. . . . And this certainty restored her confidence, and with it the strength of her resistance. She found it quite easy to resist the easiest way to pacification; she was for the moment almost calm.

"Pol, my dear," she began quite coolly, "even if you did not love me as I know you do, and I did not love you, and I did love Mr. Ewart profoundly instead of hardly knowing him, you would have no reason, now or ever, to be jealous. Because—" Susanna paused.

"Because? Mon Dieu . . . what does this all mean again," he murmured, uneasy, at a loss.

"Because I should never of course do anything underhand. I

Love Days

should never break my word without first telling you. Do you understand: if things were to go wrong, and you had reason for jealousy, I should be the one to tell you. Try to understand me, Pol, so that there will be no more of this—”

“You mean to say,” he interrupted, shouting, incredulous, beside himself, “you mean to say that you would come to me and say: I’m going to deceive you, prepare yourself! I’ll thank you not to, I’ll thank you not to!”

“No,” Susanna shouted back, infected by his excitement, sitting upright in bed, and throwing off her covers, as though stripping for physical warfare, and frowning with determination. “I shouldn’t deceive you, so I shouldn’t announce it! And I don’t care to continue this ridiculous conversation! I wanted to tell you what you ought to know, that I am not a woman to watch, and get jealous about, because I have a sense of honour, and I take for granted that you have too, and I am not jealous of you . . . If I prefer any one to you, I’ll let you know or leave you, and I expect you to do the same. I want you to understand that once for all!”

But she continued to glare at him in her belligerent temper, flushing and paling with the effort of keeping it under control, and tossing her hair from her eyes until it stood straight out from her head in snaky coils and her gown slipped from her shoulder, and she was left a maenadic Amazon, stripped for action,—infuriated.

Grodz, never having seen her in a temper before today, and seeing her in a second variety of temper within the day, was at a loss. . . . Only the artist in him was receptive. “Voyons, voyons, chère Suzanne,” he tried to conciliate, staring at her, fascinated, “what a way to talk. . . . Don’t take things so seriously . . . after all I was only suggesting—”

“I do take things seriously,” she flew back at him, “and I will take them seriously! I’ll take them any way I take them; I’ll take them in my own way! And I’ll begin by telling you, so that everything is clean and clear between us, that I am going to Paris just as I said; and you ought to do just as you please! I’m going because I think it well for us to have occupations beside bathing and driving about and kissing! I miss my work, and I see nothing in marriage that could suffer through our being normal and pursuing our interests. I’m going into the world. . . I hope you

Susanna Moore's

will come with me . . . but I am going anyway . . . tomorrow. . . ."

"Aha!" Grodz was now seated on the bed, quite obviously uncertain of mostly everything; increasingly conciliatory. "Aha, this is the woman I've married; a Fury—an emancipated Fury—an emancipated Fury with a voice like an angel from heaven and a body like an adolescent Venus. . . . And I who thought she loved me," he donned his tragic love-mask, "with her caressing face and her childish ways—I who thought I had taught her to love—I—" his train of thought broke. "She talks of leaving me, and my leaving her, and of preferring others and God knows what as if she were talking of brushing her hair— To tell you the truth, my dear, I don't understand a word of what you have said—"

"Eh bien,"—Susanna, who had sunk down in her pillows after her ultimatum, was pulling up her coverings—"you can try again tomorrow. It's one or two o'clock and I'm going to sleep. Don't talk to me any more. Goodnight."

Grodz got up, flushing with the effort of repressing his manifold feelings, and extinguished the lights again on the way to the bathroom. "I respect your wish for the moment," he managed to articulate. "A toute à l'heure."

Susanna lay in the posture of repose, but her mood was far from reposeful. Her burst of accumulated temper had, it was true, freed her clotted heart of its greatest congestion, but the misery in the depths of her consciousness remained unplumbed and unrelieved;—augmented if anything. For she had herself succumbed to the unloveliness of uncontrolled temper, and nothing was thereby solved or helped. . . . Here she lay, after this ugly and silly quarrel, full of complicated suffering, unable to sleep, and soon Pol would be lying at her side, miserable too. . . . And instead, she might so easily wake up in her home, in New York, and find the whole episode a dream. The first falling in love . . . the subsequent swimming in the sea of love . . . the occasional rapture of the senses . . . the beauty of Pol in intimacy. She would gladly sacrifice the reality of all of these to be spared this ending, this knowledge of her inability to love, this opaque monotony of love, this thickening to insensibility.

And for a while she tried to drug herself by again imagining it

Love Days

a dream, by again dwelling on her awakening to her former state of independence, variety and expectancy. . . .

Her husband re-entered the room very quietly, and kneeling at the bed beside her, whispered softly: "Suzette, chérie, you forgot one thing in all your calculations:—that I love you."

Susanna pretended to be asleep.

After a while Pol rose and got quietly into bed.

Susanna wondered whether she would ever be able to sleep with his disturbing presence so near . . . After *he* slept, she supposed, perhaps . . .

She waited nervously for him to fall asleep, but he did not. She knew it by his breathing..

After a time she felt his fingers in her curls . . . and then his lips on them. . . . And she felt that she should have known that he would be unable to sleep without touching her. And, miserable as she was, she recognized the delicacy of his sensitiveness.

She formed a mental picture of his lips on her curls; and her curls growing into a little copper stream; and the stream growing into a mighty river; and the mighty river flowing and flowing, until it spanned the round earth.—And at its very end, at its mouth, where it emptied into space—: He.

Would that it were thus, she thought, as she felt his breath on her throat.

Perhaps now he would sleep, she thought; now that he held her, in a way . . . and then she would sleep, and in sleep forget all . . . all. . . . She closed her eyes.

Pol's fingers were on her hand, lightly, lightly—raising it. They were creeping softly to her arm, where it hung, flung across her body, over the edge of the bed, and moving it slowly—inch by inch—toward himself. For a moment she wondered what he could possibly be about, but as her relaxed body automatically followed her arm, she understood. She understood that he was attempting to turn her toward him without awakening her,—that he could not endure the symbolism of her back, nor its reality . . . And, captivated and a little touched by his sensitiveness, and greatly interested in his procedure, she continued to pretend to be asleep.

The arm was finally deposited at the side turned to him, whence it grew, so to say, and the breast and the head had followed along. But the rest of the body remained turned the other way, and the

Susanna Moore's

ensuing position was so uncomfortable, that had she been asleep the discomfort would have awakened her.

There was a pause. For the legs, evidently, could not be moved without being uncovered. There was a pause for consideration.—

Then Susanna—quite entertained now—felt her other arm, which still lay on her far side, being manipulated in the same cautious, soft, slow manner as the first, making the long journey toward him, and bringing along with it the complete turning of her upper body, and with it, the following along of the whole. . . .

How much she unconsciously contributed to the success of these operations, Susanna did not ask herself, but she acted up to the general situation with good will and a skill derived from experience in impersonating dolls and dead bodies. . . . For to sink with the thud of unconsciousness was rather in her rhythm anyway,—and on this occasion it was most decidedly amusing. . . . So she sank heavily, in deepest sleep, at his side, more forgetful of all but the moment than had been her fortune since she had left the party, hours before; more normally unconcerned with thought; almost ready to find peace in sleep.

But Pol, now having the blessed consciousness of his woman by his side, apparently wanted more: wanted her still closer, without incurring her displeasure. And with the same dexterous technique, calculated not to awaken her if she did not wish to awaken, he slowly and cautiously, cautiously and slowly, got her into his arms, which dove softly, for the purpose, under her body, in the tempo that has entered the world through the retarded motion of the cinematograph.

In his arms Susanna was no longer entertained—but neither was she disturbed. She supposed that in his habitual position he would now drop off to sleep contentedly, and she would then roll away and do the same . . . And with his arms about her, and her head on his breast and his lips on her hair, she remembered their first nights together, when the beauty of his body had delighted her, visually and tactually; when she had tasted the rapture of the senses; when—as she put it—she had loved him. And if, as she now saw, she had after a time no longer thrilled to him, she had nevertheless been content to have him love her,—for he was still pleasant to the eye and not unpleasant to the touch . . . As now, his arm and his breast were cool and sleek and smooth in their polished texture; his breath was fresh and sweet; and she felt

Love Days

pleasantly the nearness of that so beautifully curved cheek and jaw that clung to her hair— And the eyes, the hard eyes that pierced through her, or dove into her and out again without seeing her—the eyes were closed . . . Quiet, he was a beautiful and delightful creature.— Susanna experienced the resurgence of a warm wave of enthusiasm. . . .

Pol began to whisper, more softly than Susanna knew he could whisper; softly enough not to be heard by her asleep, yet loudly enough to be heard by her awake.

“Suzanne adorée, my little wife—you forget that I love you, that you are necessary to me, that I am happy only through you—” Nothing new, went through Susanna’s mind.

“Man needs woman—”

He’s theorizing for my benefit, went through her mind.

“I cannot live without a woman by my side—in my arms;—my own—to hold—to love— A sweet, adorable, witty, intelligent, beautiful, soft girl like you,—my girl, my own,—whom I love—whom I have taught to love—”

Susanna wondered that he did not feel her coldness, and the rejection that filled her, in the texture of her skin, in the breath of her mouth, in the scent of her hair,—for it seemed to her to be rising up and overflowing like a material thing . . . She felt rigid with rejection . . .

He was now whispering excitedly: “I die of thirst and hunger for you . . . be sweet to your lover who adores you, your Pol, who loves you madly,” and he prepared to slide his other arm under her to draw her to him.

Susanna sensed the inchoate movement and before it had time to achieve itself she arrested it,—arrested it with a deep groan that was half spontaneous reaction and half instinctive weapon of defence.

Pol, uncertain, was immobilized.— And Susanna continued to sigh and to groan, until, finally, he withdrew his arms, and, released, she sank into her pillows with a final sigh of relief.

There was silence . . . Then she heard Pol leave the bed, cross to the lounge, dragging some covers with him, and settle himself . . . He would be quiet in a few moments, and then they would sleep—finally sleep . . .

Susanna lay still, listening intently for his silence,—for his

Susanna Moore's

sleep. But he continued to toss and toss. . . . And she listened and listened, more and more impatiently, until his tossing, coming to her with ever increasing sharpness, cut into her nerves fiercely. . . .

She sat up, a bundle of raw nerves now, waiting for his restlessness to abate.

It continued. It increased.

She sank back, exhausted with nervousness. It was not only the noise—there was something else about this, too, that got on her nerves . . . a kind of shoddy dramatic quality that made of it a scene for a shoddy play; something quite foreign to herself that exhaled an atmosphere in which she was stifled . . . Yes, she would stifle in this situation, in the air of this situation . . . She did not want this, mean this . . . And he did not deserve this . . . After all, he loved her in his fashion . . . He could not help it any more than she could help being tired of him. . . .

She was tired out. She felt as though she had been tossed about on a quick moving sea for days, and had finally been thrown up on the sand of the desert. . . . She did not see how she could take him back, and go through with it, but neither could she stand this—this ugliness and unfairness. . . . Yes, unfairness,—for she was making him unhappy, really unhappy, and he could not make her unhappy, he could not hurt her—he had not the power to really touch her. . . . He could only bore her . . . bore her. . . . For she was herself and invulnerable. . . .

She heard him give his pillow another punch and throw himself on it, desperately. She almost screamed with nervousness. .

“Pol, Pol,” she shouted as though to a distant person. “Where are you? Aren’t you coming to bed soon?”

WHEN Susanna awakened late in the morning and gradually came to clearness she saw Pol, fully dressed, bustling quietly about the room engaged in collecting articles to be packed from here and from there.— Like a golden wasp, she slowly thought. He gathered, disappeared into the hall, packed, and returned for more. To and fro, to and fro, while she lay quiet, heavy, breathing heavily, almost in a trance, she thought. Never could she get up.

While he was in the hall she made a surpassing effort, which astonished even herself, and got silently into the bathroom, where she bathed and dressed, though still in what felt like a semi-trance.

On his return to the empty room he knocked at her door.

“Good morning, good morning, darling, how are you? Awake?” he called in his funny English.

“Good morning, mon ami.”

“Shall I command your breakfast, for at once? Yes? How?” he continued in English.

“Do please, thanks. I’m packing my valise, I’ll be through in five minutes.”

“Good, good, darling; au revoir, my angel.”

Susanna issued in ten minutes, still heavy and dazed, with a sleepy, an almost swollen look about the face.

Pol ran in from the hall. “Good morning, good morning, darling!” he repeated. “How are you, lazy sleeper?” She glanced at him superficially, and held her cheek to be kissed like a dutiful child. “Half asleep still,” she said.

He caught her lightly and kissed her mouth. She seemed to notice nothing; her apathy was enormous.

For a moment he stood irresolute, then he cried: “Truly you are half asleep, my angel. Sit down, sit down here”; and he made a place for her on the lounge, and brought up her breakfast table, spread out her napkin, and arranged her dishes, commenting

Love Days

cheerily on everything in his funny English, which sometimes amused and sometimes annoyed her;—this morning it did neither.

Susanna sat staring at the dishes. At last she said: "I wish they could eat into me, instead of me having to eat into them. I haven't the initiative. . . . And you've packed for hours already. It makes me vertiginous with admiration." She stuttered over vertiginous, and wondered whether she invented it, it sounded so unfamiliar. But she couldn't decide; she couldn't think, she was too thick: thoughts wouldn't go any distance at all. She had never before felt at all the way she felt this morning, or surely she would remember. . . . It was a very odd feeling, and perhaps interesting,—if she could get interested in anything.

Pol was talking all the time,—about the food, the packing, the midday steamer, the luncheon, the train. How energetic it was of him to speak of these distant things, she thought, while she ate bread and honey. "I feel just like honey this morning; the same consistency."

"It's too bad that it is raining; I hope you won't take cold, my darling!"

"Really, is it raining?" She was filled with the greatest astonishment that even this activity, so incongruous with her state of mind, should be happening.

Pol was telling the chambermaid to air their silk covers so that he could pack them later. What a mess of a room,—where were her travelling things, she wondered. Never again would she travel without a maid; had she forgotten to take one . . . or what? She could not remember just what she had thought about it. She wondered dully whether Pol really enjoyed waiting on her, or pretended to because it was in his repertoire of love-performances. Why should he pretend,—but why should he enjoy it? It was strange if he did;—there were so many things he did not enjoy about her. But waiting on her and kissing her and giving her information about things she wasn't interested in stood out; stood out as his realities, his good ones. . . .

Susanna drank her coffee and wondered whether she was going to sleep again. . . . There was a sleeping sickness, a state of coma— Still, there was no denying that even if a sickness this thick state of mind or mindlessness was pleasant. Yet she drank some more coffee, black this time, and as she drank it, she pictured it coursing through the arteries of her brain, and chasing

Susanna Moore's

before it, and out, the honey that was clogging them, and, in time, producing swift, clear and defined little thoughts.

And after a time the coffee did clear the outer layers of her mind. She apperceived more keenly, she saw for instance what still remained for the trunks, and when she had finished breakfast she was able to put her hands to helping. She even packed her suitcase. But she worked and talked and listened as though below the skin of consciousness she had been knocked into a state of semi-daze of which she was entirely aware. She wondered whether drugs acted in this way. . . . But no, they were said to exhilarate,—that was why they were popular. Perhaps the unpopular ones, the kind dentists used, acted like this. . . . They deadened agreeably, because they deadened a toothache, but no one could call them exhilarating. She felt that there was somewhere in this picture a similarity to her condition even greater than the one she had detected, but that there was no use in searching for it;—she was too thick to do so successfully. It was odd: but it was nice to feel so very stupid; no, she did not wish to awaken completely.

Their bathing things were wet, they had been left out in the rain. "Ask the *facchino* to send them to Paris, when you tip him," Susanna directed. "To the hotel. We mustn't forget to wire for rooms."

They debated about the hotel which should first harbour them. Grodz was for the Ritz, to Susanna's surprise; but she was in favour of a smaller and quieter one, and she settled on the *Napoléon* in the *rue de Rivoli*. "It's nearer the *rive gauche*, where you will probably want to work, and nearer the library of the Sorbonne, in case I shall want to use it. I worked there some years ago,—" and while she got ready she tried to entertain Pol with her various adventures as a student. There was the time that four or five unknown men had danced around her in a circle in the late afternoon dusk in the sombre court of the Sorbonne, singing a song, and had then released her without a personal word; there was— But in her queer condition she somehow spoiled the froth and made the tales dull in the telling; and he, in the hearing, still further reduced their scant life, so that they revived no more than as stiff corpses.

Susanna gave up talking at all. It wasn't really necessary to talk,—she was so pleasantly asleep that her attention didn't wan-

Love Days

der anywhere, it just clung to the present, to packing and dressing, to her sand-coloured crêpe-de-chine suit and shoes and stockings, and taupe shade-hat, and her brick red motor coat, which she was going to carry against the rain.

"Something between moon-shine and rainy weather," Pol said when he saw her dressed.

"Oh," she said slowly, staring at him with her surprised eyes, "Oh, very pretty, that; . . . charming . . ."

"You have the air of a somnambulist, my dear," he snapped, perplexed.

"You've hit it,—that's it exactly: I feel like a somnambulist."

"You slept well last night, my angel, because I saw you," he said challengingly.

"I know I did. I slept the sleep of the just killed," she laughed. "It must be the heavy weather, the sticky rain; the dampness must have got into me, I feel all soggy inside."

"Soggy, what is that, what is it in French?"

"I don't know."

"You are not ill, my darling,—not suffering?" he asked with more spirit than he had this morning displayed.

"Heavens, no!" she replied with some animation, "it's very pleasant for a change! I just feel pleasantly stupid."

They were ready to leave. The vettura had come, and the family was assembled downstairs to bid them adieu.

Pol caught Susanna with his partially free arm and turned her to the window.

"We're leaving here, where we've been happy, where we have loved one another," he said, excited and uncertain; "Suzanne adorée, ma petite femme, mon ange, let us kiss as a farewell ceremony."

Susanna smiled sweetly and dropped everything out of her arms onto the floor, and unconcerned with the thuds, placed her emptied arms around his neck. "Yes, let's—certainly! What a suitable idea."

They kissed. He, with his usual intensity, tinged, however, with a certain deliberateness new for him in the kissing state; she childishly, clingingly, thinking how pleasant it was to be kissing good-bye to all this . . . so pleasant that it might even be possible to kiss something else how-do-you-do.

She smiled at him as he picked up her jewel-box and umbrella

Susanna Moore's

and coat, and offered to carry everything; she had never before smiled a smile so sweet, so mechanical, so meaningless. She was herself mildly astonished at her facile smiles, feeling that something unsmiling lay below. . . . But she concentrated on nothing.

Farewells to Signora Ricci and the young ladies Annunziata and Elena were made; gallantly as always by Grodz, smilingly and graciously by Susanna, and blushing with bouquets by the girls, to whom this beautiful couple and their honeymoon habits seemed romance realized.

They drove in a fine warm rain up to Capri and down the other side of the mountain to the Marina Grande; Pol talking in English again and rather at random, and Susanna wrapt in her unusual but affable silence.

At the boat landing there was confusion and noise, and there were the others, all busy with their luggage. Pol, too, had to get busy with the luggage, and Susanna and Mme. Rivière boarded the boat and procured seats on deck under the awning, reserving chairs for the men.

The sea was calm and grey and smelt pleasantly salty, Susanna thought; and when they finally steamed off, Capri rose tawny and sage green and a little savage out of the water that today humbly licked her skirts. The fourteen-days-long blue and golden Capri they had lived in was as definitely set in the past by this grey and savage Capri as is a glittering jewel by a ring of platinum. Had this been a fifteenth blue day, it would have made of the preceding fourteen days a broken fragment. Susanna graciously handed this impression on to Pol, as they leaned over the rail, left to themselves by their tactful companions.

"But it is a broken fragment," he cried, frowning; "this is exactly what it is! As for me, I wished to stay here all summer;—it was only that it was too hot for you!"

"But you could not spend your time sketching me forever, could you? You want to get to new things, surely!"

"But who says that I want to work at all! Parole, it seems to me that a man who has worked like a slave for ten years, and has initiated a new direction in art, that finds many others to carry it forward, has a right to rest on his honeymoon— Parole, it is not to please myself that I find myself with these people!" He was getting excited.

Love Days

Susanna felt a certain justice in what he said—from his point of view; and she felt a little uncomfortably sorry for him. "I know, I know," she said vaguely, soothingly; "it is very sweet of you."

"And it seems to me," he pursued, "if we had to go at all, we might at least have waited a few days and have packed in comfort. We should still have had the travelling companions you seem to desire;—the Blavitchs leave day after tomorrow."

Susanna stiffened with annoyance. "Oh," she said coolly "of course I shouldn't have travelled with them, not even from here to Naples."

"It seems to me," he retorted angrily, "that you think you can always have your way!"

"But how can one go on living otherwise—in the long run?" she remarked simply.

"Eh," he cried, taken aback, "how can one go on living? You speak like a spoiled child, ridiculously! I go on living!"

"I don't see how you do it then,—I couldn't!"

She turned and walked back to where the others were seated. He stared after her for a moment, angry and puzzled. And then he glared inimically over the water into the sky, much as he glared at that Susanna who was not altogether his wife, when on rare occasions he sensed and could not ignore her.

Ewart made Susanna comfortable in her chair. Susanna thought he looked very nice in his army coat belted in at his slim waist;—all tan, like herself, and smart, like herself. And in the daylight his face looked older and interestingly haggard. She was astonished to hear that he was but thirty-one,—Pol's age. Old with experience, then, she guessed, and yet so *tabula rasa* in his approach to experience . . . so without prejudicial—prejudicial something, foreknowledge or something;—the something that covers fresh knowledge with the dust of ages, something—oh, I don't know, I'm too dull to have perceptions. . . .

"I feel dull and heavy today, as though I had taken an afternoon nap and had awakened in that half-tranced state it is hard to revive from—do you know it?" she asked him.

He told her that not only did he not nap, but that he never slept a night through; he had suffered from insomnia ever since a nervous breakdown six years before.

Susanna received this information with such unconcern and so

Susanna Moore's

funnily an indifferent "yes" that Ewart burst into his pleasant ready laugh, and explained it to her.

"Well," she acknowledged, laughing too, "I've never had either, so I can't be really intelligently sympathetic. I might like them, you know. I feel perfectly idiotic today—I have the opposite of a nervous breakdown, I have a nervous clogg-up, so to say, I feel like a heavy cat in a trance—it may be the beginning of some illness, I don't know—but at any rate, I like it. I like its feel. Consciousness reduced to the actual present, and the habitual surrounding aura of consciousness dropped below the threshold."

"You can analyse in a trance then," he laughed.

"I'm not analysing; I'm using a jargon with which I'm initiate enough to play with in my dreams even."

"You are analysing; or what do you mean by analysis?"

"And you ask me for definitions in my trance!—I'm not analysing; I'm half asleep," she repeated like a child, shaking her head. "Listen to the Rivières discussing a hairbrush."

They were. Poor Rivière was excusing himself for not having looked for it on the windowsill, and Lucille was twittering reproaches like a disturbed bird.

"So you let your husband do the packing too," Susanna remarked, "So do I. Does your conscience hurt you?"

"Not as much as my back would if I did it," Lucille replied. "Du reste, it is very good training for Rivière for when he will put the world in order;—whereas I hate putting anything in order; I don't even care about order."

"I didn't know that you ever underwent the test, my dear," her husband put in good-naturedly.

"Pol, Pol!" Susanna called, and when he came, she cried delightedly: "Voilà another husband who has a wife who can't pack!"

"Companions in misery, then," Rivière said, "I wonder which one of us is the more expert."

"Parole, we must compare notes, compare our technique," Pol rejoined as he sat down with them; and a general discussion on packing opened.

The three men discussed, and Susanna and Lucille listened, respectfully amused. Grodz was amusing, going into details about skirts and waists and lingerie. "And, les jupons plissés, mon

Love Days

Dieu, etc., etc.— We may not know much, but in any case we know more, Rivière and I, than Ewart there.”

But Ewart knew things about packing his own clothes not even suspected by the other men. They listened, not a little impressed, and slightly incredulous, as he described how a coat ought to be folded. The women laughed. Lucille told Ewart to look at Rivière's clothes if he wanted to know how he folded; as for herself, she confided, she travelled in crêpe and ratine only, when she travelled with him. Susanna, whose husband was quite as immaculate as Ewart himself, explained that they stayed at home after arriving anywhere until the pressing and ironing process was far enough advanced to permit them to reappear.

“You won't see me in Paris until I have a maid, and a shampoo, and perhaps a Turkish bath.”

“You take Turkish baths!” Grodz cried out in only too apparent consternation.

Blushing, she knew not why, Susanna replied that she did occasionally, after a trip, for its cleansing qualities.

“In a public place, a public bath!” her husband continued, oblivious of time and place, and making Susanna feel as though she were taking one at the present moment.

“No,” Susanna said to end the subject. “Of course not. Only private, private.”

“Aha.” Her husband was placated. “With the things girls do in America, one never knows what to expect,” he apologized.

The talk drifted to baths. Each of the men knew a kind unknown to the others. Steam baths on red hot stones in the snowy forest at night; sun baths near mock altars; electric baths; Japanese baths:—it transpired that Grodz thought any kind of publicity all right for men, and wrong for women. The others laughed at him a little; he grew annoyed and sullen; Susanna saw that he would have “up and gone” if there had been anywhere to go.

Capri receded more and more, and finally became a dot, a wavering dot; and Naples grew grey and stony, and finally approached spread out and huge. The harbour, and then the crowded noisy dock.

Grodz and Rivière decided to accompany the baggage to the station and check it on to Rome themselves, or to Paris; and

Susanna Moore's

Ewart, Lucille, and Susanna set out with the hand luggage for the Hotel Vesuvius, where they were to lunch.

It had now stopped raining, and they drove through streets that were strident with the life of the people. It grated harshly on Susanna's senses; she thought it scraped her thick skin of insensitiveness a little.

They left their luggage at the Hotel, reserved a table, and went for a walk in the town. Ewart was nice and considerate; when he saw them standing in puddles, shod in slippers, he wished to buy rubbers for them. Mme. Rivière twittered a horrified protest. "But you will catch cold, won't you?" he inquired. "Much rather, much rather," she sang.

Susanna laughed. "You see, Ewart, we're 'Luxusweiber.' We don't wear rubbers, we refuse to take care of our health for the benefit of our families, we decide where our families shall go, and we don't pack, and—" she paused.

"And?" he asked, bending his attractive, crooked face to her in his pseudo-absorbed manner.

"The rest of our sins as wives and citizens lie in the future." And as she said it, she really felt it,—the immanence of a series of extravagant acts. . . . She felt their immanence in spite of her tranced consciousness. . . . Strange, she thought . . . everything was strange about her mood today.

They walked about, looking into a church or two, standing in front of shop windows, shopping a little:—for a successor to Mme. Rivière's past brush, for spirits of ammonia for Susanna, for papiers poudrés for Ewart. Susanna acted as spokesman, in Italian, when she had it, otherwise filling out in Latin to her own great amusement. They had a peaceful, gay, cool time; all three finding one another very pleasant.

When they got back to the hotel, they found the two men awaiting them eagerly, quite obviously much bored in one another's society.

They went in to luncheon at once. The luncheon was very foody. No one, apparently, could eat anything the other could or would,—and there resulted a vast amount of consulting, inquiring, and ordering.

It struck Susanna that they were all as different from one another as was the food they preferred. Their only trait in com-

Love Days

mon, really, was their concern with art. Yes, this, their dedication to creative functioning was the bond that united them socially,—all but herself. And she—she flattered herself that the chief reason why she had pursued scholarship rather than literature was the slowness of her growth. And in the sanctum of her breast, never laid bare to any one, she harboured, as a matter of fact, the warming hope that in her were the rudiments of a poet, with the power for full expression in maturity.

Susanna looked about her with interest to see what dishes these various individuals had chosen, when at last they arrived. Ewart was having scrambled eggs and cucumber salad; Rivière beef-steak and an artichoke; Lucille chiffonade salad and camembert; Pol roast veal and and bean salad; and she herself a cold egg in estragon, to be followed by gnocchi à la Milanaise. She thought the outcome of her researches rather réussi and amusing, and was encouraged to turn her attention to their several ways of giving themselves to the feeding activity. Pol, as she knew, ate with vigour but with a fine unconsciousness and lack of interest, there was no danger of this arrow ever growing fat. Rivière ate with the invariable theoretic discrimination of the Frenchman, but with practical indifference. Mme. Rivière played with her food in a fastidious and bored way. Ewart—Ewart was puzzling. Although his demands were obviously both quantitatively and qualitatively moderate, he was finicking and tentative in his approach, a little as though he were not quite at home with the food, and yet found it of great importance to get into proper relations with it. He looked, as he ate, even more serious than otherwise; he bestowed the same flattering absorbed attention on his plate, that had so charmed Susanna when it had landed, as it were, on her.

Susanna laughed aloud as this thought came to her.

"What are you laughing at? Let us in," they said.

"At myself, and I can't give myself away," she replied.

Pol bent his head to her, smiling possessively: "Tell me, tell me, mon enfant," he whispered. "How I wish we were alone." It was apparent that the others were essentially unsympathetic to him; that his feeling of intimacy with her, Susanna, increased through contrast. She felt a little sorry for him again.

"Later, dear," she put him off.

At the end of the luncheon Susanna raised her glass of Chianti.

Susanna Moore's

"Here's to Paris. May it beautify our bodies, and fructify our spirits!"

They drank; Rivière saying/"we need it, we need it," Lucille looking enigmatic, Ewart amused and quizzical, and Pol annoyed and suspicious. Susanna happened to look at Pol . . . it occurred to her that almost everything she said really froisséd him: that he would be absolutely pleased by her remarks only if he insufflated them into her mind himself. She laughed again . . . why did things impress her as ridiculous, today . . . Queer queer mood—heavy, stupid, and at the same time facetious—what a combination!

They broke up, left the hotel amid much bustle, and drove to the station in two carriages. The day was still and grey and mild, in striking contrast to the animated, noisy town. They reached and traversed the station amid more bustle, reached the crowded train, and finally found their coupé, which awaited them silent and empty,—like the hole made by an extracted tooth in a crowded mouth, Susanna thought. Here they settled themselves with sighs of relief. And from here it was now agreeable enough to look out at the crowded platform, where people were running about wildly, calling to one another, gesticulating, making signs, with the grace the Italian crowd alone possesses.

Susanna watched Pol, who went back to the station to get her something to read, thread his way through the crowd of men, superficially not so unlike themselves but for his golden colour;—like them, quick, erect, graceful; but with an energy less suffused and outgoing, more concentrated and electric than theirs. Perhaps, she thought lazily, perhaps he was so wonderfully compact and contained because he was a spiritual Peter Schlemihl:—his soul cast no shadow. . . .

They talked; Pol returned with literature enough for everybody; the last fussings and excitements on the platform and in the cars were consummated, and the train started gently.

Susanna was seated at one window, Lucille beside her; Ewart at the opposite window, and Rivière and Pol next. Every one had something to read on his knees, and every one looked out of the window at the Naples they were slowly leaving, making the kind of remarks people make for the sake of being articulate in

Love Days

a circle in which they accept the duty of articulateness. And after they had traversed the country for some ten minutes, they all, in common understanding, settled down to silence and their books. All but Susanna, who continued to look out of the window.

Listening to the drone of the wheels and the whizz of the air, and looking out unconcentratedly at fluid and flowing sage green country with momentary dots of the pink and white of passing farms, agreed wonderfully with her mood, agreed to preserve it. So for an hour or more.

After an hour or more movement broke out of the party. Rivière decided to stretch his legs in the corridor, and left. Pol after a time joined him. Lucille had next to be supplied with cigarettes by Ewart. There was some question as to whether she would be allowed to smoke in the coupé, even if no one objected.

"But if no one objects, how can I be forbidden?"

"Well, if two people wish to divorce, they can't do so in most places, anyway."

"Voyons, quelle idée!" she twittered. "Rivière and I could divorce any day we wish in Paris just because we wish to. We often speak of it. The possibility keeps us together. If it were as you say we should divorce at once."

She had tied a burnt orange scarf, turban fashion, around her tawny hair to keep it clean, and her subtly made irregular face emerged from its flaming wrapping like some carefully wrought and highly finished modern cameo of a sybil. Susanna derived much pleasure from the finish of her appearance, as she also did from the striking completeness of her pose, if a conscious presentment of oneself to the public in a self-selected manner be a pose. For just as Lucille's body revealed itself little through her clothes, though they were fashionable and graceful,—just as her body remained mysterious in contrast to Susanna's, which curved and twisted shamelessly and beautifully in its covering as in a skin, so Lucille's soul too was swathed into mystery by her public presentment.

At this moment, however, Susanna was not aware of her—she was arrested by the content of her utterance. The word divorce had shot into her dimmed consciousness as a stream of water shoots into a heavy smoke,—combatting, overpowering, extin-

Susanna Moore's

guishing; bringing swift coolness, condensation and clearness. The densities surrounding Susanna's mind, which had obfuscated almost everything beyond the tiny one-dimensional consciousness devoted to immediate sensation, were suddenly pierced;—layers of misty thickness were penetrated, evaporated, and rolled away, and Susanna was again a mentally keen, sentient being, aware of herself, and her hurt;—sensitive to her past, her future, and her present.

While Ewart and Lucille discussed divorce laws in various countries,—or, Ewart, rather, discussed, and Lucille lent an attentive but essentially indifferent ear,—she, Susanna, silent and with eyes closed, plunged into her newly restored dimensions, excited, horrified, fascinated, as one plunges a finger into a wound to feel its pain.

The passed day—yesterday—was the first reality she struck against and fully encountered.

Her experience came back to her in its totality as a rudderless tossing on a dark stormy sea of emotion, in which the streaks of lightning were paralleled by streaks of enlightenment that now and then revealed adjacent small portions of uncharted sea. In the course of her voyaging through dark places she had become acquainted with many horrible feelings, and a few resplendent ones, but the latter had been short-lived, while the former had flourished and increased. And in the midst of dark miseries and their few bright companions there stood out the stern fact of failure, the fact that she had ceased to love Pol, that their relation was a single instead of a double thread, that they were now held together only by his love for her,—his oddly insensitive, unsatisfied yet unmysterious—oh, why not say it, since it was true—his stupid love for her. And she, who had resolved to—to what?—to influence, to form, to moderate this love, so that she might again catch up, so to speak, with its tempo,—she had failed, and she knew it. . . . And sacrifice herself as she might to keep him from a knowledge of failure, to keep up the illusion of success in this enterprise, whose promised objective was illimitable beauty, and whose actual marks were smallness, mechanical monotony and finality, she knew that she had failed, and would continue to fail to love him; she knew this now with a complete, bright and terrible certainty.

And she knew that something else was happening through this

Love Days

crystal quality of her insight, into which her opaque and thick consciousness had so suddenly overturned;—she knew that her acute self-consciousness was making new connections with the outside world. It seemed as though her mental realm, private until now, or at least reserved and remote, had opened wide its portals to a public reception of almost anything. She was conscious that every word she was now overhearing got in to her, and made some kind of connection with the thoughts and feelings already in her;—routed these out of their habitual appearance, and exposed them, as it were. And the external motion of this internal mechanism came to her as a painful objective vision of something hitherto only intimately and vaguely felt.

“Incompatibility” she heard Ewart mention. Yes, they were incompatible. He was unchanging, at least in his personal life; whatever of real experience and spiritual growth he suffered went into his work. As a lover he was static; as a companion he was—what was he? He was no companion at all . . . he retained fully his maleness, his simple desire to be the active influence. . . . No, he was no companion; he did not give and take; he gave only He gave generously, of course; he wished to share with her everything he had left over after his important business—his work—was attended to; but—he wanted nothing of hers. . . . Nothing except her passionate reception of his experience. This was his idea of companionship, as his idea of love was (for her) submissive passion. . . . If she were a marionette, electrified and operated by his vitality, that would suit him still better. . . . No, he wanted nothing of her as an individual,—he wanted her as one of the sex complementary to his own. . . .

Susanna flushed with painful knowledge. So little does he want of me, she told herself; and I want nothing at all from him. And she opened her excited eyes to seek calm in the view of the swiftly passing scene.

“Of course,” Ewart was saying in his earnest way, “it’s been proved that in most marriages, one or the other—or both—after a time grow tired of their relationship—”

Not of the relationship,—Susanna’s mind rushed back into her wound. A relation need not be static. Divorced they go on to the same relation with others. But they tire of one another. . . . One grows tired of the static one,—of a relation with a static creature. It was, for her, who felt herself fluid, a little like run-

Susanna Moore's

ning around a stationary point. After a while it would madden her. After she became quite accustomed and insensitive to his great but static beauty. Already she was too accustomed to it. Already she knew every feature by heart, every expression; by closing her eyes and willing to she could conjure him up. What she did not know of him was what he was unwilling or unable to disclose:—that which from the depths of him actuated his behaviour as well as his creative productiveness, that of which he was himself perhaps not conscious. It was, Susanna thought, perhaps down in these depths that persons in love with one another insinuated themselves and united spiritually. . . . But they at any rate had not. At this deep level he rejected her utterly. And as for her—it was through her eyes that he had entered, and—he had stayed there. This was where he had significance for her; from here he could still fill her spirit with little thrills of enthusiasm,—like a work of art. . . . Perhaps, if she were to see him only occasionally. . . . Or—or, if he were to change too, together with her. . . . For she was changing even now. She thought, in fact, to feel the change in her that yesterday she had been wishing and longing for. She felt more conscious, more self-conscious, clearer, more analytical, than ever before; she felt a kind of callousness unknown to her experience that made it possible to look this thing in the face and accept it.

Perhaps, she thought, this was a symptom of what people called maturity. But it was a horrible and frightening feeling, this callousness, and Susanna's heart beat and she was frightened, and thinking, perhaps I am hurt too, perhaps this is how people pay for mistakes, she lay back, with closed eyes, and an ironic twist to her sweet mouth that made it merely pathetic.

The words of the others gradually penetrated to her again. Ewart, the considerate and objective young lizard bulging with a brow that seemed a temple of wisdom, was saying; "Of course it has been proved statistically that the great majority of marriages are unsuccessful; one member is unfaithful to the other, which is probably perfectly natural, since according to psychological law people grow tired of anything after a time, etc. etc. . . ."

Susanna opened her eyes in surprise and looked at Ewart. His face wore a pouting, frowning expression while he threw out these cynicisms; he looked disgusted to the point of malaise, Su-

Love Days

sanna thought,—but it was uncertain whether he was disgusted with the world he was describing, or with his own cynical certitude, or with the necessity of having to assert it against an accepted hypocritical faith. She was for the moment distracted from herself, and lost to her own situation in an increased interest in him,—this intriguing man, who seemed to be seriously searching for solidities, and who wrote the most frothing and flippant of farces.

“Don’t you think it even possible for two people to love each other through life, exclusively?” With this query she entered the conversation for the first time. Her starry eyes hung on him expectantly, but her expectancy was attached to her interest in what he thought, not in what *was*.

He broke away from his train of thought, and smiled in his nice, kind way. “I thought you were sleeping off your trance-jag. I didn’t know that you were favouring us with your critical attention.”

“Ah, Mme. Suzanne, you must help me,” Lucille twittered, “he is a shameless cynic.”

“Don’t you think it possible for two people to love each other exclusively, under—under favouring circumstances?” she repeated.

“I’ve never known it, but I shouldn’t say it is impossible. There may be one-man women, and one-woman men who somehow get together,—but I’ve never known it. Do you think it possible?” he asked hesitatingly.

“Yes,” Susanna snapped, and although she had snapped it in annoyance at the answer, she blushed and lay back and closed her eyes again. He would of course think that she was referring to her own experience and hope; he would attribute to this her blunt certainty, her irritation, her blushes. She had made him appear indelicate, and herself ridiculous. . . .

She continued to frown and blush with annoyance at herself. Why had she wanted to know what he thought, anyway. . . . What he thought wasn’t of the slightest consequence; what she thought was,—or would be. And she had always believed in exclusive love—for herself. And instead she had none,—of any kind. And Ewart and Lucille probably were exchanging glances, and thinking of her as a love-sick girl, for the time being mentally incapacitated. And, instead, the naked truth was that all the

Susanna Moore's

energy and interest she had invested in her love-affair to make it appear successful to herself, had withdrawn at the news of its failure, and was now re-invested in mental speculation about it.

Susanna laughed a funny little laugh, which the others ignored politely, and opened her eyes, and bending into them, flashed out: "The trouble with psychological theories is that to be interesting they would have to apply to every case without exception, like laws of nature,—and they never do; they never apply to cases one is interested in. At present, in their present state, they are at best rules with exceptions, and one's always coming across the exceptions." Susanna laughed, but she did not blush.

"That's what we all think,—that we're the exceptions; we are conscious of our differences from each other, and exaggerate them. But we have as much in common, and more; and psychological generalizations may be approximately true, it seems to me."

"Certainly approximately. Let us, for instance, grant for argument's sake that your law that married people tire of one another sooner or later is true of ninety-nine per cent. of them,—it seems to me that it is an insignificant and uninteresting statement because there's always the one per cent. that invalidates it as a guide to behaviour. The one case in a hundred in which one or both may never tire, because they continue to love,—or because they are incapable of love,—or because they do not require love."

"But granted that what you claim is true, isn't it valuable anyhow to know what the average behaviour is and must be?"

"Is—not must be. And I don't think it's valuable to the individual as a human being; it has its interest for the student of social institutions, of course.— I suppose I really simply mean that psychological theories don't interest me, because they never have seemed in the least to apply to me." Susanna laughed; she laughed this time at herself, her old self, and felt a little disloyal while doing it.

Pol and Rivière returned. They entered cheerfully and seated themselves. Rivière amiably accused Pol of having flirted with an Egyptian lady with a ruby scarf and turquoise earrings.

"He is envious of you Grodz," Lucille said; "he is dying to flirt with African ladies himself but he doesn't know how."

"Ah, who knows,—if they would give me a chance," her hus-

Love Days

band put in archly.— He's a dear, Susanna reflected, while his wife laughed, a little patronizingly, and more than a little admiringly. "En effet," he pursued, "the Egyptian, I must admit, gave our handsome friend here no choice. She presented herself, how shall I say, as a formidable mountain in a narrow path—the corridor—to be as it were scaled every minute and a half."

Pol was giggling a little,—his rippling little compact giggle: "Your comparisons, mon cher, are excessively picturesque."

"Eh bien, mon ami, you do not deny that the lady resembles a mountain at least as much as a lady. She is indeed a handsome monster, but a monster nevertheless."

"Point de vue, point de vue," Pol murmured, while he squeezed past to whisper in Susanna's ear. Ewart offered him his place, but refusing it, he knelt on the floor to everybody's discomfort.

Ewart rose, to stretch his legs he said, and took up a position at the threshold, smoking a cigarette, talking to Rivière, and discreetly watching the performance of Susanna's husband.

Pol was whispering in Susanna's ear, giggling a little: "That Egyptian, do you see, is my Mr. Ewart. That is, she is a mountain, and he an obelisk," he described the dimensions with his hands; "and a mountain may be a volcano—not so an obelisk, en tout cas. Nevertheless I am jealous!" He glared at her now with his desire-to-eat-you-up expression;—she knew that he wanted to caress her,—wanted to badly. But, after throwing inimical glances at the others, he thought better of his intentions, for, rising, he took Ewart's seat, where, bending forward to Susanna, he continued to tease her under his breath.

Susanna laughed a little; teasing was after all one of the best things he did; at least it showed him conscious of her as an individual with individual traits. He would want to tease any woman with whom he had love relations, because it was a masterful attitude, but he could not use exactly the same methods in teasing them, whereas he could in making love to them. And yet he would not greatly vary in his teasing, either, since it would always be on the subjects of flirting and loving and their opposites,—the only subjects that counted for him when women were concerned, that counted sufficiently to stimulate him to exercise his wit.

Seeing him obliged to sit opposite to her, latent, as it were, Susanna realized with satisfaction that the social factor through

Susanna Moore's

which she was hoping for relief from him was already to some extent functioning. And in reply to his question, "Are you still tired or sleepy or whatever you were, *chérie*?" she brought her eyes back from the green and grey landscape beyond the window, the pink and white farms, the orchards and meadows and hillocks and brooks, and sheep and cows and goats, and brought her mind back from pasturing on his limitations. . . . "No," she said in English for the benefit of every one, "not exactly; but it's an effort for me to talk in a train; the motion and the drone of the wheels make me want to shut my eyes and muse." And she took her smelling salts from her bag and sniffed at them. "Have a sniff?" She offered them to him.

"*Merci, merci*,—but shut your eyes, angel, and muse, muse, muse. What a pretty word—like music cut short. I will keep watch over you."

Susanna smiled at him sweetly. "How charmingly put," she murmured. "Goodnight."

She leaned back, and closed her eyes, and although he was so very near to her in all his golden glory, she found it possible to plunge back into as objective a consideration of him as though he were thousands of miles away. These little remarks of his, that formerly had fallen so gratefully on her ears—: she still enjoyed them, but she now knew that she must, as it were, discount them as having nothing to do with their relationship,—with her. . . . And she told herself again that she had nothing to do with any of his real possessions and qualities; that his genius was unaffected by her. Not that she wished to influence it: genius was self-created and self-sufficient, but it was that his genius was not in any way aware of her. The depths of his nature, whence it drew its sustenance, were indeed depths buried in unconsciousness, unable to share themselves, unable to show themselves—: she had never even had a view. . . . And even these gay or witty spurts of his had decreased to the point where she forgot that he was capable of objective and picturesque apprehension, and was delightfully surprised when occasionally he gave utterance to something inspired by it. And his theoretic pronouncements were pronouncements ready-made and apparently inflexible, and meant for anybody who cared to hear them.

No, she thought again, he had not the faintest embryo of any organ for the functioning of intellectual companionship. . . .

Love Days

And, if he had . . . would she want it? Did she really want him in any of these ways? Had she . . . did she? She hardly knew, but at the moment it seemed as though the only way in which she had been moved by him was visually, through the eyes. His appearance, his motions—the motions of his body and his spirit—had had the power to move her. What a queer expression, taken in freshly: moved. Touched meant affected, made to feel alive. But moved . . . moved must mean: to be moved out of your usual self to a different level, where in a new position you could take in new stuff of life; enrich yourself. . . .

Susanna smiled a little at her philological invention. Yes, he had moved her, he still moved her occasionally,—but beyond this nothing happened. She was not enriched; she had not enriched herself through him. Perhaps it was because she was moved back again before she really got a chance. . . . And she was tired of being moved and moved back again.— Arrived at this point in her thoughts Susanna almost burst out laughing. She would have liked to have told some one of her definition:—if she were not married, or if Pol were not present, she would have.

She opened her eyes a little, and squinted over to see where were her forgotten companions. Pol was opposite, reading. Rivière was napping with his hands folded on where his stomach would have been, had he one. Lucille and Ewart were missing; probably they had gone to look at the Egyptian. Susanna pictured the Egyptian as a hugely inflated Mme. Blavititch, with turquoises for granites and a ruby scarf for a green, blue and yellow “art nouveau” one, and eyes less flashing and more almondy, and tempo less pseudo-dynamic.

How strange it was that Pol had liked her, Mme. Blavititch,—because he really had felt pleased in some way or other in her company; at least he was not bored. While it was equally apparent that he was bored, if not actually uncomfortable, in the presence of the charming, rare and gem-like Lucille. Gem-like: Susanna had got this impression in noticing Rivière’s attitude toward his wife. She quite obviously dazzled and fascinated him, as would a glittering diamond, and he hardly knew what to do with so precious and useless a gem, he, whose talents were, to be sure, æsthetic, but whose philosophy was utilitarian. Certainly, but for the happy accident of her artistic gift, there would have been no place for this gem in his entire world scheme, much less in his con-

Susanna Moore's

jugal bosom. So, for two years he had companioned this woman through life, fascinated, at a loss.

And she—Susanna fancied that she derived strength from him in some fantastic and romantic measure, and that in the swathed depths of her she knew it, and meant to hold to him, eternally—with her talk of divorce as one of her swathings, *bien entendu*.

Susanna had come to these convictions with a good deal of satisfaction to herself, and yet, had any one—or fate—refuted her, she would not have been especially astonished:—she was wrong about people so often. . . .

But so was every one else. Even Ewart. . . . She felt quite certain that even he, equipped with statistics, theory, literature, and experience, and all, was full of mistakes. What, she wondered did he think of her, of them! And Susanna's brows shot up, and her mouth was a little ironic as she pictured his astonishment, were she to initiate him into the truth;—until, suddenly like a flash of lightning, it came to her that the truth would not only not astonish him, but would confirm him in his cynicism. That truth, which she herself knew only since yesterday, and to which she had almost grown accustomed in the course of the last few hours.—

Susanna flushed,—every new insight seemed to bring with it a flush—, for in the train of her latest thought came the realization that she was not only not immune from the applicability of theories, but that in Ewart's crude and simple words she was after two months and a half tired of her husband, and that they were incompatible.

Susanna buried her burning face deeper in her cushion and held her breath, as she took in what her insight had revealed in all its simple visibility, mathematically outlined, as it were.

And there was no help for it, as far as she could see, unless Pol too tired of her. . . . Perhaps Ewart had another theory that would further enlighten her on this point— Of course he had:—divorce. But here Susanna's courage to see gave out. Divorce, while one of the two loved, was simply unthinkable. It was not so much a murder as a torturing of love. She could not torture Grodz's love. No matter how inexistent it was for her, it existed, a real entity, for him. . . . Some day it might die, like hers. In fact she greatly wondered that it had not died before hers. For if she had had little to nourish hers on, he had had even less

Love Days

—really very little, almost nothing. He had given himself to her in a specialized, limited, small way,—but she. . . . Well she had simply been there to be taken, and he had not known how to take her, or he had not wished to take her,—not as herself, as an individual, as Susanna Moore. What he had of her, and wanted of her, was unindividual, was generic; was what he might have had from any woman agreeable to his senses and his vanity; any woman he thought in love with him. . . . Any woman willing to be impressed and moulded by his masterful maleness,—stuff for his masterful maleness to practise on. For he seemed often to be practising, practising with full voice to be sure, but still practising, not simply expressing. There was a suggestion of showing-off in his performance for all its spontaneity,—it lacked the spirit of uniqueness. And yet marriage was unique, and final,—if left alone!

But it was simply impossible to think of herself as final in his life—it was ridiculous! As impossible as to think of him as anything but a fantastic interlude in hers. Certainly he would tire of her;—certainly.

Perhaps he had tired a little of her already. There was Mme. Blavitch last night. At least she had kept his amorous attention from her, Susanna, for a time—for the time of her actual presence. To be sure he had been unrelaxedly amorous later on, but Ewart might have a theory that applied to this phenomenon as well. And if it came to that, she might dig a few theories out of the dim educational quarters of her head herself,—substitution theories, and so on. . . .

Susanna kept her eyes closed, but she felt them popping open, as it were, under her lids, registering the surprises her thoughts brought with them.

But there Pol was, opposite, reading calmly, content in the knowledge of her nearness, comfortable in his sense of possession. She tried to put herself in his place, right in his place, opposite there, to get his view of her and try to understand why he had not yet tired of her completely. But the herself she thought to get through his eyes and his mind bored her exceedingly, and she still could not see why it did not bore him as much. Almost everything she said really annoyed him. In a way it annoyed him that she had private thoughts at all, and their quality must certainly bore him, because they never roused him to anything. He either

Susanna Moore's

tried to stifle them, or to turn them off—off of him. And yet, he did desire his mate to be intelligent; this was a demand that he consciously made. Perhaps he thought that such a one alone could give to him that appreciation which his accomplishments as a lover called for. Yes, he demanded that his love should be intelligent,—passively so, as it were; he wished her to shine brilliantly, but by reflection. As long as he was brilliant, so long might she be; as long as she loved her lover, so long would he refuse to be bored by her.—Heavens!

Susanna's thoughts were racing along to conclusions so quickly that she became herself suspicious of them. Yet, this outlook,—although she could not recall the steps by which she had arrived at it—once seen, impinged with the feel of hard necessity;—not only logical necessity, but back of this some hard reality. . . . She felt certain, absolutely certain now, although she no longer knew why, that he would tire of her as soon as she ceased to shine by his light, and would cease to love her, as soon as he knew that she no longer loved him. . . .

She opened her eyes, that were receiving so incredibly much illumination when closed—as though its source were being generated in her mind independently of external stimuli—; she opened them on Pol. He, engrossed in a play of Wilde's, was smiling over its keen edged brilliancies; these things he would have liked to say himself, these little flashes of wit and of superficial wisdom that struck individual objects like forked lightning, leaving darkness behind. But, though engrossed, he seemed to feel Susanna's attention, for he looked up, and seeing that she was awake, snapped his book closed.

"Mon Dieu, pourquoi me regardes tu comme ça, mon ange!"

"Je te regarde—je te regarde—j'aime te regarder,—voilà!" Susanna almost giggled; she felt a little drunk with the power of knowledge, insight, or whatever it was that had come to her,—second sight, perhaps,—yes, decidedly second!

"Voyons, voyons," Pol murmured, annoyed and flattered as usual by her light compliments to his beauty.

"Tu ne me le défends pas, je suppose, mon ami?" she went on flippantly, making a face.

"Voyons, quelle enfant." He shook his head, quite obviously hesitating whether to pretend to be amused or not.

Love Days

"You don't forbid it then? Too bad; forbidden fruit tastes best. Du reste, I do nothing else than the Egyptian did."

"Ah, the Egyptian," he giggled, "I must go and see whether she is still alive or has died of love."

"Yes, let's go and see," Susanna got up, stretched herself, and looked out at the landscape. Still grey and green, but deep twilight-grey and green; the country more hilly and mysterious and lovely, with distant vague soft mountains, and vaguer grey towns perched on them, or between them in their soft hollows; and nearer by villas and farms in the verdure, vividly white and yellow and pink in the dying grey light.

She was stiff,—from the rigidity of her position and from the concentration of her racing thoughts—, but she was seduced back to her seat by the beauty of the travelling view. She persuaded Pol to go out by himself, and incidentally to investigate the question of tea; and, having dispatched him, and alone now but for the sleeping Rivière, she devoted herself to looking out of the window, fascinated and enraptured by the loveliness of the scene, self-forgetful,—content. Content to be drinking in this beauty, this ever-changing absorbing beauty, that was giving her these moments of happy absorption; and content, she also felt, to be doing something for it in turn, so to say, by paying attention to it and admiring it. For she felt that there was something pathetic about its being flown through at such a pace, and even thus being neglected;—it was a little as though some beautiful creature had to submit to public exposure, and after submitting found that the thousands who had the chance of seeing her flew by without a glance.

Susanna's eyes looked fixedly into the flying loveliness, her ears received and grew accustomed to the drone of the wheels, her mind slowed up and became a blank, and she fell asleep.

She was awakened soon after by the jolting of the stopping train. It was almost dark now, and the little station outside the window was lighted, and the hustling passengers were shadowy. There was commotion inside as well as outside: Rivière had awakened; Pol and Lucille and Ewart entered the compartment. The latter had had tea in the Buffet car, but as dinner was now going to be served it was doubtful whether Susanna could get tea anymore. A waiter passed, calling dinner in corroboration of

Susanna Moore's

this news.— They debated. Pol, as usual, resolved the difficulty by action. He flew off to get something at the station or to bribe the waiter to serve something.

They decided to wait to dine in Rome, where they were due in an hour and a half,—in any case, even if Pol brought nothing back from his foraging trip. They all were going to stop at the same hotel, on Susanna's recommendation, the Bellosguardo, where Susanna had often before stopped, and to which she had wired for accommodations in her maiden name. She now invited them all to dine with her in their salon; it would be less trouble, they would not have to dress, and they still could go out after dinner if they wished.

"Then you have adopted your husband's name—or not?" Lucille asked.

Susanna had never thought of the matter. Her passport was made out in his name; she travelled that way, but she expected to continue to publish under her own name. "How do you arrange?" she asked Lucille. Lucille compromised. They registered J. Rivière and Lucille Chapu, Mme. Rivière in parenthesis. Susanna thought this quite a neat way out of it, and decided that she too would adopt it, and she laughed at the thought of what Pol would make of this.

There was some more talk on the subject; Lucille remembered that she had recognized Susanna's identity only after she heard her name. "Some actresses," Ewart put in, "adopt their husbands' names even professionally." "I wonder why," Susanna said; "perhaps they are so fond of them that they wish to make them the gift of their notoriety." "We, you and I, could never do that, since our husbands are already famous; too bad," twittered Lucille, "for otherwise we might register Mme. Grodz and Mme. Rivière, and husbands."

At length, long after the train had started, Pol returned with a waiter, a supply of sandwiches and bottles of Chianti. A table was pulled out, the dancing plates and glasses were distributed, every one was served and they 'gôûted.'

"Eh bien, Grodz," Lucille said, "we have seen your Egyptian."

"We have studied your Egyptian," Ewart put in.

"In the Buffet car having coffee in some weird way, and," Lucille pursued with her high-pitched flowing inflection, "I hesi-

Love Days

tate to tell you, *mon cher*, but she has most shamelessly transferred her interest from you to Ewart."

"Don't be cruel, Lucille," Susanna said, "she probably took Ewart for Pol—their golden hair—" All but Pol laughed.

"On the contrary," Ewart said in English, "she probably took your husband for me. She's probably been waiting forever for me to turn up, and when he came along first, she made a mistake and thought he was I."

"Does it happen to you often," Susanna smiled, "and do you ever get there in time, before the mistake is irretrievable?"

"I like to get there after it's irretrievable—"

"I don't believe you." Susanna continued to nibble at her *pain de ménage*. "I don't know why I don't believe you, but I don't. I believe everything you say about everything else implicitly, you know—but not a word, not a thing, you say about yourself."

Ewart laughed. "Don't believe a thing you say about me either, please."

"What shall I believe? What I merely think,—or what I should like to think?"

"What I should like you to think."

"How shall I know, since I don't believe what you say?"

"You'll know in spite of that, when I myself know."

"Oh,—when will you know?"

"When I've made up my mind about you."

"Oh, you haven't done that either—what has interfered?"

"Well," he hesitated, "I hardly dare tell you."

"Don't," Susanna said seriously, "because I hardly dare hear."

Ewart looked at her, undecided, a little puzzled; she had turned to the others, who were talking excitedly about Gauguin and African art.

"I suppose," Susanna explained to Ewart, "that one of them said the Egyptian looked like a Gauguin, and that started this battle."

"She's a big fat common carpet vender, but she's not as bad as a Gauguin."

Susanna was amused, Ewart had shown more warmth in this expression of dislike than at any time before. "You're being an iconoclast, you know, in this milieu," she said.

"Oh, I don't pretend to say that Gauguin's pictures aren't art;—

260

Susanna Moore's

"I don't know enough about painting—" Ewart looked almost seasick, "but I know types, and his are bestial and ugly."

Susanna laughed; this was intriguing coming from him who was credited with having created the American equivalent of Gallic farce wit. "I dare you to break this news to the artists," she said.

But the artists were talking, Rivière and Pol at the same time, and apparently were disagreeing. "Enfin," Lucille interposed placatingly, "in any case the Egyptian probably loves all men potentially, but as she cannot love them all in practice, she limits herself to golden-haired ones;—all the rest is indifferent."

"True of few women—true of many men," Ewart mumbled.

"What is?" Susanna asked, "the potentiality of loving any one of the opposite sex?" She hung, fascinated, on his lips: "Really any woman—do you think?"

"Approximately, within certain limits; taboos being what they are— Such men love the sex, not the individual."

Susanna, whose lips were open for further discussion, sank back as though she had received a burden which she must let sink in before she could become active again. Her sharpest feeling was that of astonishment. She was hearing nothing that she had not indifferently heard often before, but this recognized body of theory was now weighted, as it were, with a new pertinency which caused it to sink straight into the core of her receptivity.

"Provided,—” Ewart added, and paused.

"Then there is a provision?" Lucille twittered.

"Yes, there is always a provision—Provided the men succeed in feeling what they expect to feel through the opposite sex; they must be loved in return, as it is put sentimentally."

He looked disgusted, but Susanna did not see him, she only heard his words, as she lay inert, glowing with knowledge.

"What does he say?" Rivière asked and received the information with a shrug of his shoulders. "Quant à ça, qui sait? At all events it is more true of primitive man," continued the social reformer, "for it is equally true, that as man advances in civilization and his faculties become constantly more differentiated, there arrives a certain—"

His wife cut him short and asked with insolent amusement: "And do we women, my dear Ewart, love you for your sex alone

Love Days

too, or do we poor ones perhaps love you in spite of your sex,—for your genius, your intelligence, your beauty, your golden locks, or your raven ones, or your virtues?”

“Ecoutez,” Pol, after having kept a disapproving silence, burst out. Everybody looked at him, willing to do as he ordered; even Susanna turned her head and gazed at him starrily, expectantly, a little astonished that he was going to contribute. “Ecoutez! To speak of love in this way, to theorize about love, is as ridiculous as to theorize about art! It has no value for enlightenment on the subject. It is the act of creation alone that counts; and the act of loving— No one can tell you anything worth while about art but the great artist, or about love but the great lover. All the rest is smoke. Smoke that obscures. A conversation about art—criticism, so-called—may itself be a work of art, if it is witty, suggestive and so on, but it is of no consequence to art. So with love: you may make poetry about it—but you can teach the lover nothing— Only he can tell and teach— The lover can tell you things, many beautiful things, if he wants to, and if you want him to—”

“I think there’s a great deal in what Pol says,” Susanna broke in hastily, thinking to foresee with a horrible mixture of embarrassment and suppressed hysterical hilarity what the coming sentences might contain. “Let’s be witty, then; it’s easy for you Ewart—but for me! Love, then, what shall we say of it—”

“I’d like to hear what you say,” Ewart helped on.

“Love,” Susanna went on, driven by her fears, “love is like radium. It burns, and it’s very expensive.”

Her husband shouted a translation to Rivière, and tried to get to Susanna to give her some tangible sign of his appreciation of her contribution. Unfortunately or fortunately there was, however, no room and he was obliged to sit down again, with the inexpressed vestiges of his gratification in full view on his face.

In the meanwhile Ewart had asked: “You mean because it’s rare?”

“I mean nothing in the world but to please my husband,” Susanna had answered.

“Expensive,” Lucile took her up, “there I agree. The wear and tear—the new furnishings to suit the new visitor—the adjustments—” Everybody smiled; she had so obviously made none. “Eh, Juan, mon ami, l’amour, c’est cher?”

Susanna Moore's

"Everything worth anything is expensive, *mon amie*," he said seriously and simply; "but one spends oneself gladly sometimes." His wife took this with her usual insouciance, but her eyelids fluttered.

"I wish we might have light in here; ordinary, real light," Susanna put in, "you all look so daemonic, it's unpleasant being with you."

Pol, nearest to the door rushed out to find out why the electricity didn't work, why they sat in the dark. For it was now quite dark. Susanna knew that they were now travelling through the lovely Alban Hills, of which one could see nothing; that soon they would be missing the Campagna as well, with St. Peter's gliding around the view for half an hour before they reached it and Rome.

They spoke of Rome; all of them but Pol knew her more or less well—yet her very name thrilled— Susanna, in fact, thought the name more thrilling than the place tonight,—like love. . . .

Pol, returning, reported that the electricity was out of order but they might have an oil lamp if they wished.

"But it will smell," Lucille complained. "And we'll still look malevolent," Ewart added. "It is very well as it is," Rivière declared. "Much better, much better," Pol confirmed, shoving his way in next to Susanna, displacing the accommodating Rivière.

Here in the dark her hand was tightly held by Pol, while her eyes tried in vain to see out of the window into the dark evening. Desultory remarks were made in low voices; Pol's lips brushed her ears and cheeks as they whispered things to her, the suppressed things of before, no doubt. For Susanna did not listen; she always had this source of strength, that she could on occasions remain insensitive to foreign presences. So she pressed his hand in response to his pressure, every now and then, mechanically and yet as a sign that she was aware of him, and folded up within herself and pursued her own thoughts and feelings, undisturbed by his physical nearness, so long as it remained static.

She was indeed singularly undisturbed in every sense now. The dreadful chaos of yesterday's emotions that had tossed her and filled her with extreme spiritual nausea, had passed. She had accepted the failure of her marriage as a fact, and with it its reduction and shrinkage to the kind of a fact for which theories had relevancy. The difference between today's and yesterday's recep-

Love Days

tion of the situation was indeed chiefly a difference in attribution of cause:—yesterday the failure of her marriage had seemed like the crumbling of a beautiful, permanent structure,—a mysterious, terrifying phenomenon like those which primitive peoples attribute to diabolic spirits. Today she knew that the cause was ascribable to the nature of the structure itself: there was neither permanence nor beauty in it,—it was just a case; a case for Ewart's crude generalizations.

And she had other sources of comfort. . . . The crumbling structure had not injured her, and it would not injure him. And as they both were blameless, they would not hurt one another. He had loved her as he could, and she had loved him as long as she could. When he would have noticed that the structure of their love was dust he would wish to clear it away, as she did. . . . They would part friends . . . their affair would end in some kind of beauty,—both unharmed and free. Free—free—free, she chanted with the revolutions of the wheels, while he pressed her hand, and she responded mechanically.

"We ought to be approaching Rome," some one said. "Can you see the Campagna?"

"Yes," Susanna replied, "at least I divine it. The hills have lain down, and there is the plain and an occasional mound, but I can't see the horizon, and I can't see St. Peter's though it must be right over there—"

The others pressed to the window, but saw even less with their unaccustomed eyes.

Soon there had to be light for packing. The men tried their hands at lighting the oil lamp—Pol lit it. Getting ready began. Lucille unwrapped her cameo head out of its chiffon folds, powdered, rouged, and put on her hat with infinite care, while Pol played at combing Susanna's hair, powdered her nose, rouged her lips, and kissed them quickly. Susanna laughed, and supplemented his operations. Her coat was crushed; Pol took it into the hall and shook it energetically, came back, brushed her hat, and finally flicked the dust from her slippers with his handkerchief. Susanna laughed again; fortunately he never used a handkerchief in a more intimate and usual way, not to her knowledge, at least—nature had made it easy for him to be æsthetic.

And looking her over investigatively to find something more to

Susanna Moore's

do for her improvement, and failing, Grodz looked her over again appraisingly, and nodded his satisfaction. Susanna saw, and laughed: he was proud of her beauty at any rate, and of her elegance,—even more of her elegance. And she would feel proud of him as well, if she had any sense of possession, she knew; for the freshness of his golden beauty, the intensity of his flashing cold eyes, and the vitality of his erect body—his flame—was unimpaired by the long trip that had so noticeably bored and annoyed him alternately. But—she had no sense of possession, and the sense of frail connection with him was growing constantly more attenuated. . . . And the less she felt it, the more she liked him,—and the more she felt it, the more she wanted to push him away. . . .

Suitcases were clicked open and closed; the train whistled, slowed down, jolted, accelerated, and jolted some more; people rushed by in the corridors as though they were leaving the moving train; conductors looked in for luggage,—all in the semi-darkness.

Susanna caught sight of the Egyptian enveloped in many clothes shaking through the wobbling corridor,—a strong dark face and gleaming eyes. “Oh, the daughter of Pharaoh—I had forgotten her; she’s rather nice.”

“Entre nous, she is horrible.” Pol whispered, “she isn’t a woman at all, I believe she is a man; she frightens me, and that is saying something, parole!— But sit down, sit down, you will tire yourself, my angel—”

“But we’re there,—here—in Rome—”

They were; they had arrived in Rome, and the train was pulling into the station. Squeaks were added to all the other noises; squeaks and grindings and then the cries of the *facchini* trying to enter.

Susanna felt excited and elated and depressed all in one—Rome and Pol. . . .

They traversed the animated station, full of attractive people, attractive in one way or another;—Susanna breathed deep breaths of invigorating social atmosphere.

They were shown to the Hotel autobus and entered it with several English ladies and an old gentleman; the luggage was mounted to the top with thumps proportionate to its weight; and they started through the streets of Rome; streets dark and damp

Love Days

and empty beyond the glow of the station square, but wonderful streets, saturated with Rome, oozing Rome eternal, as it were. Too bad, Susanna, her heart beating, thought, too bad that Via Veneto is so near. . . . But here it was. . . .

They drove up to the brilliantly lighted porte cochère and entered the hotel, a modern, comfortable place, with an air of privacy and daintiness; a rose and silver and crystal and silk hotel rather than a dull blue and gold and bronze and brocade one.

This was the hotel Susanna had always stayed at with her aunt, and she held out her hand cordially to the proprietor, a dapper little Swiss with a wavy beard, when he advanced to greet her and her party. He bowed low to Susanna, made an appropriate speech, took a professional look at the party, and remarked that he had, although crowded, reserved a suite, salon, two rooms and bath for Miss Moore; and was Mrs. Cathay not here? Also the other rooms that were ordered were reserved.— And he eyed the extra man in perplexity.

That was very nice, Susanna said, just what was needed. Mrs. Cathay was very well, but in America. She was travelling with her husband, M. Grodz; and her friends; and she thought it would be well to register.

The proprietor thought so too, while bowing his acknowledgments of the introductions, and they proceeded to the desk. Susanna was conscious of a curious embarrassment in connection with Pol's entrance into the milieu of her former status; she was aware of him in a new social way for the first time since her marriage. And there was a curious something, she felt, about it, as, dimpling with amusement, she registered, with a side glance at Lucille:

"M. Pol Grodz.

New York City.

Miss Susanna Moore (Mme. Grodz). New York City."

and handed the pen to Rivière, who registered as his wife wished it done. "Please write my name, if you don't mind," Ewart begged. "Claude Ewart—e w a r t" he spelled.

They all went up in the lift together accompanied by waiters and porters, and planned to meet in Susanna's salon in half an hour. Everybody seemed inclined to dine out and get a little more of Rome, so they decided upon this.

Susanna Moore's

"I'm sure Mr. Lutz gave me my favourite suite," Susanna said as they shot up in the lift after the others had been deposited on the lower floors. "On the fifth, with a view, and furnished in blue instead of pink—Aunt and I had it several times. How nice of him to remember—"

She was right; it proved to be the same suite. There were flowers on the table of the small salon, and the lights were lit, and there was a wood fire in the grate, ready to be lighted. In the bedrooms, one on each side of the salon, the beds were already turned down for the night, the curtains drawn, and the shaded lamps glowing pleasantly.

Susanna, beaming, was directing the distribution of the luggage, and Pol stood frowning, hunting for change for the porters. The porters were tipped, left, and they were alone.

"You could very well have had him change the suite and give us a suitable one, when you told him it wasn't for your aunt—which you might have thought of before, parole!" He seemed more hurt than angry.

"I suppose so," Susanna replied, "but I'm tired, and the temptation of having a room to myself and a long sleep was too great to resist, chéri. It suits me beautifully, you know," she went on bravely in a light tone, while he stared at her frowning. "I adore having my own room, and you wouldn't begrudge it me, dear, I knew. But I must hurry and bathe if I am to be ready and give you your turn. Will you open the suitcase—mine—like a dear?" she pulled him into her room. "And just think, we are in Rome in Rome, in eternal Rome, Pol," she cried, dancing around as she took off her hat and gloves; dancing around as she took her things from him, which he unpacked in offended silence; dancing to and fro from the bathroom to the valise, ignoring his sulkiness, and reciting chantingly—:

*"Exaudi, regina tui pulcerrima mundi,
inter sidereos Roma recepta polos,
exaudi, nutrix hominum genetrixque deorum . . .
te canimus semperque, sinent dum fata, canemus . . .
te canimus semperque . . . canimus semperque . . .
semperque. . . ."*

And we have a balcony from the salon—no, let me see, I think it is out here!" She danced to the window. "Yes, it is out

Love Days

here! How nice, how just right!" She blew a kiss to the Rome outside the window. "And my peignoir—" she grabbed it. "I don't know where we are dining—for what kind of a place shall I dress?—" She really felt happier than she knew how to account for . . . Now that she was back in her former atmosphere, dipping into the past, Pol seemed almost negligible. . . . She could almost imagine herself only engaged to him, with the intention of breaking it off. . . . She burst out laughing at the thought.

"You are very gay all of a sudden," he cried, staring at her resentfully. "It seems to me—"

"I am, I am," she cut him short, "and you ought to be too!" and slammed the bathroom door.

She rushed madly through her bath and toilet, put on the black lace dress she had brought with her, earrings and all, and was out in the parlour in less than fifteen minutes, fresh and brilliant.

She knocked at his door. "I hurried as much as I could; the bath is yours, Pol," she called to him.

He came out, still frowning. "Are you going to kiss me soon, I should like to know," he inquired snappily, donning his love-mask.

"Certainly, as soon as you're washed and dressed, nice and clean, like me. Don't come near me this way."— He had to make the best of this.

Susanna went out and stood on the balcony while he was getting ready, and breathed the night air of Rome, against which she had so often been warned, and found it good,—mild and benign and with the suggestion of a whiff of incense every now and again. And with it there seemed to be wafted to her faintly, mysteriously, enchantingly, sensations of the Vatican, of the Borghese Gardens right back of her, and the Palatine, and the Villa Farnesina, and all the places she loved and was thinking of. . . .

She had had no idea that she could care so much—could feel her surroundings so keenly.— She had, since she was with him, been aware of places only as backgrounds, settings, physical or decorative impressions,—not as things in themselves, whose personality she ecstatically felt, like this. . . .

Pol joined her on the balcony and kissed her so lightly on the nape of her neck, that it tickled her, and she shivered. He pre-

Susanna Moore's

pared to take her into his arms, but she objected to being mussed. And as he respected her feeling for perfect grooming he contented himself with inhaling drafts of her perfume instead of herself, so to speak, and on complimenting her on her elegance. She returned the compliment. Not even Ewart with his packing secrets could look more perfect, she told him.

"But, mon Dieu, aren't we ever going to shake this crowd, mon ange! You know I am fed up with them, most decidedly, parole!—I believe it is time we were alone—If you are tired, why go out again in a party—why not let them go; and dine here quietly, or else give them the slip—Parole, here is an idea: let them come and find us gone!"

"Since we asked them to dine it would be more than rude; quite impossible, mon ami," Susanna replied affably but with a tone of finality that closed the discussion.

And indeed, here they were entering, all three rather fagged and unenthusiastic, rather simply tired travellers. But the sight of Susanna's black and cream and diamond radiance and her happier mood revived the drooping party a little, enough at least to permit them to propel themselves out of the hotel with a semblance of cheerfulness.

In the lobby on her way out Susanna stopped for a second to say a few words of appreciation to Signor Lutz; Pol stopped with her: there recurred the former feeling of slight embarrassment in connection with him. In another instant it had taken definite form—: she felt, she now knew, as though she had with her not a husband, but a lover— How curious . . .

They got into fiacres and rattled to the Corso. The streets traversed were quite empty and for the most part dark. But the very stones and bricks were alive, Susanna thought, and tonight, in the cloudy close night, with a lowering, enveloping sky, were intimately and concentratedly alive, as though all of that life called Rome were compressed into them.

On the Corso there was some liveliness: in the restaurants and the movie theatres there were lights and people.

They dined at Bellini's, lightly and rather hastily, for they planned to drive about the city afterwards—to St. Peter's and the Colosseum and so on,—wherever they felt like going.

The dinner was not very gay. Rivi re held forth on the history

Love Days

of Rome in fragments, into which the others shattered his discourse by inattention. Pol was undisguisedly bored; Susanna, making observations, knew now how boredom affected him,—he became impatient, restless, rejecting. Ewart seemed simply tired, in some physical, some almost pathetic way. So Susanna and Lucille talked to each other most of the time;—about the Italians present, about their types, and their tastes, and their probable qualities; Pol disagreeing with everything they agreed on, and Ewart listening with complete detachment.

Dinner ended, they stood outside on the street. Lucille remarked "It seems much too damp to me to go driving." "That's just what I was thinking," Ewart fell in heartily, "I was thinking I'd go home, if you'd all excuse me." "En effet," Pol cried, "it is a ridiculous idea of Susanna's to go driving in the dark damp—I propose that we go to a Variété;—one can't go to bed right after eating. Yes? Bien. I'll find out about it," and he dashed back into the restaurant.

Susanna felt pleasantly relieved: the idea of driving about Rome in this company had long ago ceased to be attractive; the theatre would be just the thing for them all. And, as a matter of fact, the Rivières liked the idea; even Ewart revived, and decided he was not as tired as he thought.

Pol emerged with information and a waiter to direct the cabbies to the theatre only a few minutes away.

Upon entering the theatre the dismal party re-animated. Ewart grew professionally alert, Pol began to enthuse about variety shows, the Rivières were mildly expectant, and even Susanna, who ordinarily detested these shows, found this sudden change of scene delightfully right. They procured seats well toward the front, and went in.

The house was large, warm, smoky, and full of flashing eyes and laughing mouths, and noise. A man on the bright stage was singing a comic song, and the audience was roaring with laughter and approval. For every song he changed his clothes; he became a cabby, a young lady, an apache, a capitalist. He seemed to be a great favourite; he was obliged to give encore after encore.—When, finally he was allowed to go, four acrobats came on; two men and two quite young girls, the Melli brothers and sisters according to the programme. One couple looked distinctly Ger-

Susanna Moore's

man or Scandinavian, the other man suggested the Bowery, and the race of the other girl, a good-looking, husky, dark woman, became the subject of debate in the party.

Pol went into raptures over her, as she did her stunts. What straight legs, what a swing of the hips, what a torso, one could feel its muscles, what a good completeness to the whole body, and what rhythmic agility! He admired her jumping and running. he admired her in repose; he even liked her when she stood frog-like as "understander" to the lithe little Bowery man. And he liked her white satin corsetty bodice and red satin trunks and flesh tights as well as the things she owned more intimately and completely. He guessed that she might be Hungarian. Like Mme. Blavititch, Susanna thought.

"She has tremendous verve and vitality," Ewart remarked; "she gets on my nerves." He could not add that Pol's transports accompanied her there, but he proclaimed quite loudly for the latter's benefit: "But she expresses nothing; she has nothing but animal spirits. Lots of animals are infinitely more graceful than she is, and they don't wear red trunks, except monkeys occasionally, and never pink cotton tights."

Pol answered scathingly, and the whispered remarks made by lips that were situated in heads turned to the stage so as to miss nothing, threatened to become an art quarrel.

Susanna cut into it with a diversion: "I must tell you, Ewart, I once saw a story advertised, called the 'Understander,' and got it, to discover that the kind of understander meant was this acrobatic kind: the one the other stands on—"

"Do you like to be understood?" Ewart whispered back, while the little Bowery man slid down the unknown understander's back and they both jumped on one foot, blowing kisses, and then retired for a moment in favour of the other couple.

"I shouldn't know if I were, since I don't understand myself very well."

"Really, how is that?" Ewart was scrutinizing her in his fashion: as though she were a pleasant curiosity.

"Oh, it's that I'm very conscious of myself and my feelings in themselves,—but not as qualities, not in relation to others.—I'm like—" she had found a picture, and laughed. "I'm like a country that has a highly developed internal government, but no foreign policy."

Love Days

"Like our country, then," Ewart laughed.

"Exactly like our country!" Susanna dimpled with delight. "Quite without any conception of one's relation to the outside world because of the erroneous belief in the possibility of keeping from foreign entanglement—"

"Isn't it dangerous—unpreparedness?"

"I should say so. But the other thing is even more so—studying others for your protection or for gain. How can you ever, if you do that, get to yourself, to feeling yourself, and following yourself, and becoming a self-expressing individual?"

"But since you're not that only, but in relations with the outside world besides, if you don't understand them and are unprotected, how are you going to defend your individuality?"

"If it's strong enough it defends itself: it may be temporarily enslaved but it cannot be defeated;—that's where the strong internal government comes in." Susanna knew that she was treading toward dangerous ground; yet how undangerous any ground felt that she shared with the objective and wise old young Mr. Ewart. She smiled with confiding starry eyes into his.

He said: "I can't ask you to tell me how you manage without understanding yourself, but I'd love to know; not to form a foreign policy, you know, but only to feel what you feel for a moment,—because I think it must be very—nice and very—interesting to feel like you,—if you would let me?"

"Oh, thank you," Susanna's eyes looked out blindly through the acrobats into the future; "and I will, I'd like to—if I get a chance to—"

"Why shouldn't you since we're both going to be in Paris?"

"Yes, I suppose that's true," Susanna said vaguely. "Are you staying in Paris long?"

"For a time;—and you?"

"I don't know—I haven't any plans. No foreign policy again," Susanna murmured, a little overcome by her lack of insight into the future.

A pyramid had broken into a candelabra, and the candelabra had broken into four pieces, and the theatre burst into mild applause. Pol's attention which had been riveted on the dark girl was freed for a moment. "Mon Dieu, what a lot of talking—what were you talking about, eh?" he asked.

Susanna Moore's

"Things that don't interest you, mon cher. Theories, opinions—mine." Susanna laughed a little strangely.

The acrobats were jumping from one to another's shoulders; a drum beat the accompaniment dramatically. "There is what interests me," replied the artist, absorbed. "Action, tension, release,—life. Look at her, look at her: what accuracy of movement—He," he added after a time with a toss of his head in Ewart's direction—"he, of course has no eyes; just a mind, which drags after life—like a brake—"

Susanna was in the meanwhile whispering to Ewart: "If I let you in it will be an alliance; what do I get out of it?"

"What do you want?"

"Preferential treatment it's called, I believe—"

"It's yours, whatever it may be when it doesn't refer to taxes and imports."

"Very well. You want to know me as I know myself, if it's possible, through the medium of our minds—yes?"

"Yes."

"I'm to tell you how I feel—you're not to expect to see me in action, so to say."

"Very well."

"You're not to expect to share my feelings; just my conscious reactions to them; do you understand?"

"I do; I agree."

"You're always to remain in the same relation to me; you're not to fall in love with me, or to pretend to."

"I shan't—I shan't do either."

"How do you know?" Susanna asked with genuine surprise. "Almost every one manages the one or the other with little encouragement."

"I know, but I shan't."

"Are you in love with some one else?"

"No, I'm not."

"Well then?"

"I think I shall tell you: I'm a burnt out volcano, Madame Susanna."

Susanna said "Oh" and made an inchoate gesture of removal. There was a pause. Then she said "Of course I should have preferred you a Mont Blanc with virgin snows, or just a nice verdant hill with comfortable paths . . ." Ewart laughed. "I

Love Days

don't fancy volcanos, even burnt out ones . . . I once lost a jewel I prized peering into the crater of Vesuvius; it dropped down. I don't mean this quite as symbolically as it sounds. And anyway," she went on as he remained silent, "I don't believe you, you don't look like a volcano—you're too—too thin—I do believe you're untruthful again."

But he refused to say any more.

The acrobats departed for good among the moderate tumult of the crowd, and there now came the intermission.

The Rivières who sat in the row ahead turned around and at Pol's request gave their opinion of the handsome girl; she might, they thought, be Tyrolese or Bavarian. "No, no, jamais," Pol asserted with a degree of heat suited to some discussion of immanent importance.

"Go and find out, Pol, if you're really so interested," Susanna suggested.

Pol was quite abashed by the suggestion,—almost bashful. "But I can't go behind the scenes without an introduction or a reason!" Yet he looked as though he would love to, and were quite ready to.

"Why of course you can; it's even more customary here than at home," Ewart informed him. "Give the man at the door a few lire, and tell the acrobats you're an artist. Speak French, or find an interpreter."

"That's all, that's all," the Rivières encouraged.

Grodz stood hesitating, torn between the wish to go and uncertainty as to the method, when suddenly he shot a look of suspicion at Ewart and Susanna. "Things are not done like that here," he shouted.

"But they are," Ewart asserted.

"Go with him, Ewart, do. Please—will you?" And seeing how the idea bored him, Susanna added, amused, and naïvely serious: "Preferential treatment!"

Ewart laughed, and got up without enthusiasm. "Don't you all want to come too; it may amuse you," he suggested more hopefully.

But no one did; and, Pol accepting his guidance, though a little shamefacedly, they went off together, Ewart saying: "We shan't

Susanna Moore's

be long," to which Susanna replied pointedly, "Oh, please don't hurry at all."

They watched the two walk down the side aisle with an usher, walk back of the boxes, and disappear through a door. Susanna had an idea. It struck her that it would be most pleasant to go home now, and rather diverting to leave Pol and Ewart behind on this mission of Pol's—though for different reasons.

Lucille fell in with the idea, and Rivière seemed delighted to cease being amused. So they left hurriedly, laughing, and drove back to the hotel through the sleeping streets, looking forward to rest.— It was now about eleven o'clock.

Susanna entered her suite. She closed the door and leaned against it, luxuriating in her unexpected singleness. It might last no longer than fifteen minutes, but it was wonderful while it was a fact . . . And she might imagine it to be permanent . . . She entered her room happily and locked the door; she would keep it locked until she was ready for bed anyway;—it was so delicious, this privacy.— She undressed in her room, instead of in the bathroom atmosphere, as she had been doing; she threw her clothes about in a fashion quite foreign to her habits, and in her wrapper with her coat thrown over it, she finally stepped out on the balcony.

The night was dark, Rome was dark, and she could discern very little. But she felt herself in the former gardens of Sallust, and she knew the view before her intimately. For her the Queen's garden, the little nunnery, the flat roofs beyond the church and monastery of the Capuchins, the ascending Palazzo Barberini and the Quirinal set in green were all here, as were, a few blocks back, the Borghese Gardens of eternal spring.

All of Rome was in fact apprehended by her consciousness visually, spread out as a huge map, unrealistic only in its hourlessness. For some of it was lighted with the morning sun, some with the setting sun, and some lay in the moonlight. But, nevertheless, she was seeing the eternal city on the dark balcony.

Susanna fell to thinking again, and the clarity that had suddenly illumined her today, and the fluidity of her thought were still regnant. Here she was, for a few moments free from her husband,—she mused,—who here in her old surroundings, seemed

Love Days

so entirely a lover. She wondered why—for it had not before occurred to her. They had married more or less suddenly one Thursday, after fixing on the date the Monday before, and no one had been informed but Mrs. Cathay, who went through the informal formalities with them loyally if disapprovingly. Even their engagement had been a tacit affair as far as the outside world was concerned. The day had simply come when Grodz never ceased for a moment to urge her to go off with him that week; when the impatience of his love touched her, and hit on no known obstacle.

For she had been sure she was in love with him, too. Even now, in retrospect, she felt that she had been in love with him. The long list of her friends who had tried to plunge or push her into love dragged sketchily through her memory. She had resisted them all, easily, until Grodz appeared. And then she had fallen in love, of her own accord,—had not been artificially propelled. She had fallen in love with the first man she admired, whose embraces had beauty, and were uniformly agreeable to her; whose touch was cool and sharp and slippery instead of fleshly and sticky and prickly. Susanna blushed as the idea of love with these others came to her for the first time since her closer acquaintance with the realities of love; and she turned from it.

So she had got ready during the week, thinking it quite wonderful that she really was going to do what every one else did, and what she was supposed to do, supposed to be predestined to do, urged to do, reminded constantly to do—: to fulfil herself in love.

And they had left immediately for a friend's estate on the Hudson, and a week later they had sailed for Europe— And ever since, there was honeymoon, private honeymoon, until today's public appearance . . . In private a husband and a lover were no doubt identical, Susanna thought, in any case . . . All cats were grey in the dark, grotesquely shot through her mind . . . It was in public that they differentiated in colour, spiritual colour, as it were. And Pol differentiated into a lover; his uxoriousness had this tinge. She wondered whether indeed he needed a wife at all, as he asseverated constantly;—if he did, it was certainly not herself, not herself, who, giving herself in love to the only man possible, had grown tired of love, had proved to be what she had

Susanna Moore's

so often been accused of: cold and incapable of love, incapable of that feeling that normally accompanies the gesture of love and makes beauty out of sensation, as music is made out of sound. For to her the experience had remained sensation; at times more than pleasant; usually merely not unpleasant; and even now not painful, but only insignificant, empty, and increasingly vapid.

And although she was so far unharmed,—for it had all been easy enough while her lover was agreeable to the senses and negligible to the spirit, she could not go on leading a life that bored her profoundly;—it would indeed be too expensive; eating into her vitality, deadening her spirits and stupefying her soul.

And he would not want it. No, in a little while he would tire of her beauty and would come in contact with her naked spirit and find it wanting in all those attributes of femininity he ascribed to it, and of which he was enamoured. All those qualities that paralleled physical femaleness—: receptivity and pliability and frailty and submission, appreciation and absorption:—surrenders of all kinds. Susanna smiled for a moment as she thought to see herself through his deluded eyes: white young half-formed sensitive yielding and relaxed, like her body; bringing her gifts of brain and breeding, all her active impulses and deeds, to his altar, and having them there exchanged into passive ones, for his gratification,—for the exercise of his marvellous manhood expressing itself in his achievement as lover.

Yes, soon he would notice that the dross of individuality had not been transmuted into the gold of ideal femaleness—. Susanna came back to this point again and again, for it was indeed the point, the core of the matter, from which all hope sprang. And she was convinced of it, and so hope did spring, and suffused her with its glow, foretelling deliverance.

And suddenly, in the empty night, the bells of Rome began to strike twelve.—From all around—spherically—came metallic sounds. . . . Peal upon peal. . . . Singly. . . and mingling in metallic patterns . . . High-pitched, hollow, full of piercing sweetness.— The air filled up with plangent reverberations,—sensuous, sensual . . . And, gradually, at the end, long drawn out, delicate, plaintive, dying vibrations . . . And then, silence again.

Yes, Susanna thought, as she left the balcony with the vibra-

Love Days

tions still echoing through her body,—yes, he would tire of her beauty as she had tired of his beauty so miraculous that the possibility of tiring of it had entered her mind as little as the possibility of tiring of the beauty of sunsets, or of great elms, or of this clangorous music in the night. . . .

In bed her thoughts continued for a time.— As her love had passed, so would his, his so detached and floating love for her, blooming indeed with a simple fragrance, but living without roots—like a weed. And his genius would remain untouched by her loss as by her possession, and so would his wonderful pleasure in living things,—Mme. Blavititch and that acrobat girl tonight, for instance.

Susanna wondered vaguely where he was . . . But it was comfortable and somehow very amusing to think of him and Ewart together. . . .

What fun it would be to have Ewart for a friend, a real, a passionless, a psychological friend, like an intellectual echo, turning her feelings into concepts, and returning them to her. Not since Lucius and Tom had she had such a friend, and Lucius was a reformer who had come to conclusions about everything but himself, and Tom had been in love with her. But Ewart was an objective observer and a burnt out volcano. . . . So here was something new and promising. . . .

Susanna fell asleep with a smile on her half opened lips.

She awakened with difficulty from the very depths of sleep to find Pol kneeling beside her in the act of awakening her.

"I didn't want to go to bed without letting you know, *chérie*; I thought you might worry; you will forgive me?"

Susanna was heavy with sleep and unwilling to come to.

"Don't be cross, *chérie*," he begged. "It wasn't my fault; it was really yours, you know, my angel, for running away; when wives run away, husbands will play. Don't be cross—"

"But it's the middle of the night, and I was asleep—" Susanna rubbed her eyes and opened them on him; he looked excited and pleased.

"It's only two o'clock," he said in a pleading voice, quite lost on Susanna, "or three or so. But, *mon Dieu*, what a friend you have in your elegant carrot!—*mon Dieu*, *ma chère*,—you would not have recognized him, after I treated to champagne! I

Susanna Moore's

avow that he is amusing when he is gris—parole!" he giggled.

"Champagne—where were you?" Susanna asked sleepily, taking things in slowly.

"Eh bien, when we found you gone, we remained a while, and then went back, and I invited the whole party to supper—the singers, dancers, acrobats, dwarfs; even the trained dogs, but only one accepted. In all twelve people." Pol laughed. "And we went to some theatrical dive—your friend Ewart was master of ceremonies, he understands it, one must leave him that, *ma chère*! We sent out for champagne and music— Parole, it was amusing afterwards, especially the dwarfs— You are not angry, my angel?"

"But since we came away you could not ask us, of course. But it might have been interesting to see Ewart brilliant. And you, were you tipsy too?" she asked politely.

"Jamais de la vie—I don't like being drunk—I amuse myself too well sober!"

"And the girl, the acrobat—was she Hungarian?" Susanna asked politely, wishing she could go to sleep again.

"Italian, born in Tripoli—and not a word of anything but Italian." Pol giggled. "We had to speak in gestures—it was amusing enough, parole! A girl with much wit and cleverness. I amused myself for the time being," he laughed a reminiscent laugh. "You are not cross, *ma petite chérie*? And quel type, cet Ewart, parole, one must admit that he is amusing when he is tipsy!"

"You'd better go to bed, hadn't you, Topsy dear; and I'm awfully sleepy, you know," and Susanna fell back on her pillows, tired from this turmoil of new impressions he was pouring into her sleepy head.

"En effet, sweet angel, I think I had; it must be after three o'clock! I'll tell you the rest in the morning—give me a kiss." He bent over her and they kissed lightly. "Sleep well," cried he who had awakened her from sweet deep slumber, as he left the room.

Susanna's sleepy head lay heavily, filled with a jumble of dwarfs, dogs, acrobats in red and white making signs, music, noise, and in their midst Pol, making signs and giggling, and hovering over him, like Mephisto over Faust, Ewart, with monstrous streams of champagne flowing down and filling a crater-

Love Days

like void in the centre of him.— Ewart witty and surprising and shocking, as in his plays, and Ewart receptive and serious and kindly, as when sober, and the two Ewarts glaring at one another, and then converging. . . .

And little by little these pictorial thoughts grew fainter and fainter, and there remained only a featureless funny party, away from her, one with which she had nothing to do, and at which Pol was amused and happy. . . .

She fell asleep soon again, happy in the memory of the lightness of his kiss on her lips.

IN a fine November drizzle Susanna drove home from the Bibliothèque Nationale. It was early afternoon, yet the impression made in the wet, slate-grey streets squeezed in between heavy and protruding buildings was that of early dusk. The population with its habitual contempt of its habitual rain went about its business in its usual dark habiliments.

Susanna watched them idly through the dirty cab window:—their open shops, the packages under their arms, their uniform dismal clothes, their self-possessed polite approach to one another, their so definite cheerful and un-nervous manner.— If appearances were evidence, these people must to some extent possess the art of living with one another. At least they did manage to get into relations of mutual understanding through their elaborate and intricate system of conventions by which everything not capable of fitting into some convention became taboo. And it was indeed quite simple and logical, Susanna thought to discover, to simply conventionalize everything, good and evil, including the so-called unconventional. Under such a social system one with immoral impulses would at least be obliged to control himself to the extent of being immoral in some accepted form,—correctly immoral, so to say. And subtly half-toned unique modes of bad behaviour would disappear, and subtly half-toned unique modes of beautiful behaviour would disappear. . . .

And why not let them go, Susanna asked,—why not regulate things into conventions, and rule out the rest? At least this was an honest and a clear regulation—any one could read as he ran.—And life itself trampled the individual into general moulds.

These people at least made order in their lives and destroyed illusions; they were capable and calm and certain; even their outbursts of emotion had an object—an end—in view. They were an admirable people,—sane, clearheaded, active, purposive, content. They knew what they wanted, and they wanted what they were capable of getting.

And looking out at the dismal streets and the drab men and women and children in cheerful pursuit of their business, Su-

Love Days

sanna recognized that they also knew how to deck out the drabness of life with a coating of beauty; they knew how to divert themselves without fooling themselves. They made the best of things, but they did not pretend them to be good.

The taxi rattled along. Susanna suddenly felt discouraged. She was indeed tired of all these streets; these, and the pleasure streets where other men and women moved about even more violently in the business of acquiring pleasure, and the accepted means to it,—clothes and jewels and food. She was tired of them all, although it was but a week since she was again out in them—well enough to be out in them.

Her only good hours in fact were those spent at the Library, where for the last four days she had worked from eleven to three; and today there had been no good hours at all; she had been tired while she worked, and she was now more than tired; she felt bruised with fatigue. Her work, which was meant to act as her tonic, had betrayed her. She resolved to go to bed again on her return home, and she kept her mind fixed on its comforts.

The taxi turned into the rue de Rivoli; an expanse of light grey sky, and the gold and black grille of the Tuileries Gardens, and its now leafless trees and its perennial statuary cheered the day with a little brightness. The flower kiosk at the hotel corner struck the one gay note in the encompassing grey.

Susanna went upstairs to her rooms situated on the court, a small and quiet ancient courtyard garden. Her maid, Jeanne, greeted her with timid reproaches, which she accepted absent-mindedly. The light salon was warm and cozy, and a luncheon of chocolate and brioches and eggs was ready for her. The physical ease of the place struck her gratefully, and the thought of bed lost its compelling seductiveness. She had her damp things changed to dry ones, put on a wrapper and sat down on her lounge to lunch.

Jeanne reported that the secretary of M. le Docteur had telephoned to inquire for Madame and was very ennuyé to hear that Madame was sortie in this weather. Also a gentleman had called, and the office had asked when Madame would be at home, and she had replied after five.

Susanna, having eaten a little, lay back on her lounge to rest.—

Susanna Moore's

Dr. Devereux was indeed a wonderful friend to her, wonderfully devoted to what he considered her interests, chiefly of course for her father's sake whose life-long friend he had been as well as physician in his last illness. And yet—and yet she could not cease to regret that any one at all—any third person—had been involved in the affair of her marriage. . . . She could not cease to regret that it had not terminated without the aid of her illness, and the resultant mediation of Dr. Devereux. . . . At least it might have dissolved with the scant beauty of a natural process; but no, her almost fatal illness and her delirious revelations and the Doctor's intervention had cut it up like a deforming operation . . . or a murder. . . .

Yet Pol had taken the severance of their ties well, according to Dr. Devereux, and according to a letter he had written to her in which he agreed to their separation and subsequent divorce. And the evidence far more convincing to her, that which kept her eyes dry and her conscience clear was her own observation of the abatement of his ardour and his exigencies during the hectic three weeks that preceded her collapse. He had been uniformly attentive, indeed, but his attention had lost its hot breath, as it were.— And Susanna believed with complete certainty that his love was moribund, and that breaking away from him was but its coup de grâce. But she believed too that his vanity, or whatever men call their pride of possession, was still alive, and she continually regretted that the initiative for their separation had not come from him, if there had to be a deliberate severance rather than a simple falling apart.

And probably she would never know just what did occur, then, when she was unconscious enough not to be able now to recall anything at all of her state, and yet, at the time, aware of Pol's presence and desperately hostile to it. . . . Nor later— For when, partially recovered, she had inquired for Pol, and Dr. Devereux had told her of her delirious ravings not only in the presence of the nurses and himself, but chiefly in Pol's presence, she had in her weakened condition broken down and told the doctor of her unhappiness in her marriage and the impossibility of its continuance, and her conviction that Grodz too was dissatisfied with their life together. She had of course not expected the Doctor to take any part in the matter. Yet immediately after Pol's next visit to

Love Days

her sickroom, during which he was constrained and distressed, suffering from the consciousness of what had passed in here on his former visits,—when on one occasion she had almost died of his presence,—immediately after, there had been an interview between Pol and Dr. Devereux, which had eventuated in the desired agreement.

Susanna had often tried to imagine how things had actually transpired on this occasion. She had pictured Pol's discomfort when confronted by this imposing old man, dignified by a long life of experience, and justified in this intimate intrusion into their affair by his duty as physician and his loyalty as friend. She pictured it with infinite discomfort of her own, which kept the picture vague and scant. Indeed, she never really got far beyond the stage of regretting acutely this intervention of fate—in spite of the fact that she was enjoying the results of its timeliness.

And after this her only direct communication with Pol had been by letter. As soon as she was able to do so she had written to him, laying bare her conception of their failure, frankly and tenderly, and he had answered her untenderly, formally, accepting the facts, but politely declining to take an interest in their explanation.— Yes, that was it: his vanity was hurt—his pride was wounded, and he would never now send her the friendly thoughts which their relation to one another should have engendered, like an echo . . . and which in her case were, she thought, ensured to him.

And yet he had meant more to her than she to him, she was sure of that. For she had never even thought to love another: whatever of her had entered into her surrender to him was whole and eager. And she had loved him for his individual beauty, the beauty of his form, as it were, his physical and spiritual form;—even though it had not lasted,—her love. While he, without illusion, open-eyed, had sought in her nothing of herself. He had sought only her femaleness, to which she herself was but a casket, a superfluously finely wrought casket, as far as he was concerned, for a casket was to him but a shell to be cracked open and cast aside for the kernel.—And he had found her femaleness chiefly physical, and hence more negligible than he had expected.—No, he had no deep attachment to her; she had been nothing to him that others could not be, as well, and better.—He had

Susanna Moore's

loved her for something she was not— She was a failure,—a failure as lover and beloved both.

Susanna tossed restlessly: it was ridiculous to go over the past again and again, as she did; as she could not stop doing. Her physical weakness was to blame.—For, all said and thought, he was well rid of her; the solidarity of his life as artist and as lover was unshaken.—If any one had been hurt, it was she.—Certainly the world had changed for her; if it was her vision which had created the change, certainly she was changed. But was she hurt? Was it a hurt to see the world without illusions—nakedly—drab, and dressed up in shams? . . . She did not know. And was it a hurt to adjust oneself to such a world? . . . She did not know.

If at the present it hurt and gave nothing but pain and a sense of futility, this surely was due, she concluded, as she always concluded, to her weakened body, her diminished vitality. When she would again be herself physically, she would know for sure whether or not she was hurt—impaired; she would know the significance of her new view of the world.

It was strange how little interest, then, she really took in getting well: she had to remind herself constantly that it was a great desideratum. . . . And now her own way of doing it had, it seemed, failed. For, laughing at the Doctor's emphatic commands to go South, she had declared that she knew work to be her best tonic. But now she knew that it was not; for it had not only ceased to interest her today, but it had tired her horribly; she knew that she was worse today than any day since she was up; weaker; more feverish, with a gone feeling in her chest.

But what was she to do? Where was she to go,—alone, as she was?— Dr. Devereux had recommended the Riviera; but it was impossible to think of herself there. She did not know how the glaring sun and the blue sky, palms, casinos, and people pursuing feverish enjoyments could seem as monotonous and empty as a dark drizzling November day,—yet they did. The mere thought of it all bored and tired her.

Her father had gone to Switzerland in quest of health.— Susanna tried again, with closed eyes, to remember his last year. But only a tenuous little cloud of recollection floated in, and again dissolved. Trying to hold it fast was like trying to realize more fully a faint perfume: the act of concentration defeated

Love Days

its object. There was only an impression of great plains of snow, and of an interior with a kitchen stove near which she sat on her nurse's lap. The tall man with a blond beard who flitted ghostily through the interior might derive from her father's photograph rather than from the actuality. Her mother she remembered a little from later years, but the meagre memory picture of that year was void of her image.

But suddenly Susanna thought to feel a desire for this white bleak country awoken in her; she thought that she had found a vista, a prospect, in these vast monotonous white stretches, broken only by brown patches and blue shadows and glittering sun,—these silent and indifferent spaces, that were just what they seemed to be. . . .

She need not go to Davos, her father's last home; she could not get well in the atmosphere of disease and tragedy;—nor would she go to the Engadine, where people flew about in sport-clothes in screaming pursuit of pastimes— But there were everywhere in Switzerland quiet, hidden-away, pretty little places. Here and there . . . here and there . . . everywhere. . . .

The procession through her mind of innumerable inns and chalets, on soft and silent white hills, or in silent and soft white valleys, soothed and quieted her, as though their monotonous coolness had already begun to abate her feverish restlessness. And soon she dropped into sleep.

The room lay in deep dusk, the *bisque* clock on the mantel ticked gently, the rain dropped almost silently against the windows, and the leafless trees outside waved their denuded branches languidly. Jeanne, young and serious, sewing under a shaded lamp in the bedroom near the open door, was the silent guardian of Susanna's sleep for a peaceful hour.

"How would you like to go travelling a little, Jeanne?" Susanna called to her when she awakened.

Jeanne rose and entered the room. "I could not be better off than in Paris, Madame," she answered vivaciously and with obvious regret; "but if Madame has need to travel for her health, I am ready to accompany Madame. May I ask whether Madame has decided where she will travel?"

"Thank you, Jeanne.—No, I haven't decided, not quite. I shall

Susanna Moore's

consult with Dr. Devereux tomorrow. Tell me, has Mr. Ewart not telephoned today?"

"No, Madame, not yet.—Ah, le voilà, perhaps," Jeanne added as she went to answer the telephone ring. "Quel nom?" Susanna heard her ask. "Bien, je vais demander.—Madame, a M. Poledo asks to see Madame."

"Oh," Susanna breathed.— In another minute she had decided, and rose. "Say that he may come up; and light the lamps," she directed as she went into the bedroom.— What else was there to say; for although she felt no desire to see him, although she envisaged seeing him with a kind of dismay, if he was in Paris she would have to see him sooner or later: she could not refuse to see him indefinitely; she had no reason for that.

She changed to her black gown with an unwillingness so extreme that she wondered at it. He had been her friend, and a charming friend, and she had given him hardly a thought since they last met, so that there was nothing to move him out of his position of charming friend. Yet she felt no charm in connection with his re-entry into her society, and his friendship had lost its weight; it seemed a tenuous and unsubstantial thing. He belonged to her past, she told herself, and he should have remained there.— She had some trouble in overcoming step by step the strong reluctance she felt in entering the salon to receive him.

There he stood, his handsome warmly glowing self. For a moment Susanna's feelings traversed the gap of events and awakened to their former freshness, but only for a short moment; the return of her consciousness of the present transformed them back again.

"Chère Suzanne," he began in his eager manner, but arrested by her appearance, he suppressed the rest of this speech, and with tenderness in the clasp of his hand, and the glance of his soft eyes, and pity in the voice he tried to subdue, he burst out: "You have been very ill, pauvre chère, but you are better, are you not? You are regaining your strength?— But sit down here—You do not know how happy I am to see you again and how sorry I am to see that you have not entirely recovered, ma chère Suzanne. You have been very ill?"

Susanna smiled graciously with the glacial graciousness that had descended upon her suddenly together with the necessity of adjusting herself to events instead of simply rejecting them, and

Love Days

seated herself in a chair after a sidelong glance at the lounge her body ached for, and replied with stiff and cool pleasantness: "Yes, I've been very ill; my first real illness, you know. Three nurses and doctors and everything that goes with a thorough case of pneumonia; delirium, fever, coughing spells, weakness, and now an emaciated and consumptive appearance." The word "consumptive" escaped her without previous intention. She laughed a little, but for an instant she wondered over it;—how it had been in her mind quite unnoticed. . . . But she had to put off the considerations it engendered, for Turro was saying with conspicuous softness, his eyes pools of black ink:

"But you have changed in another way, *chère amie*."

Susanna found herself again resenting the intimacy of his tone; and ignoring his questioning sympathy, and the tenderness of his eyes,—ignoring everything, she remarked politely: "And what brings you to Paris at this season?"

He replied that his favourite sister was ill, and that he had come back to see her and had found her much improved but still suffering.— They proceeded to discuss her illness, Poledo a little unwillingly. Susanna politely, objectively. She had always thought his great devotion to this sister, on which he dwelt so much, very beautiful; it had in a way served as a card of admission to her friendship;—yet today she doubted it: she doubted its unselfishness; she found that she no longer associated any disinterested affection with him.

After this discussion had gone on for some minutes Turro dropped it and broke through the screen of their artificiality with his full-throated laugh. "Do you know, dear Suzanne, that you are being a little droll, pretending to be interested in these details which do not interest you at all,—or trying to make me believe you are. *En effet*, my dear, I do not recognize you; you have greatly changed."

"I suppose, my dear Poledo," Susanna replied with stiff and light amiability, "you wish me to show an interest in yourself rather. *Eh bien*, since when are you in Paris, and how long are you staying, and are half the women of Paris charmed by you, as in New York?" But she sincerely hoped he would not tell her.

And he did not: her casualness was too much even for his hardy optimism. "Suzanne, my dear, don't talk to me in this way;—

Susanna Moore's

you talk to me as if I were a stranger; and you must know what I have told you again and again, that once a friend I am always a friend. I am your friend, dear, just as before, through thick and thin; you know it, and yet you treat me like this, like a stranger." His tone grew a little excited. "I—never could I adopt a cool and indifferent tone with a friend, never,—how can you then, Suzanne?— It was Lucille Chapu who told me about you; about your being here, and your illness, and the rest. You do not guess how all this has distressed me, *chère Suzanne*." And his eyes wide-opened with their look of disinterested enthusiasm sought Susanna's.

But Susanna listened to him with the immobility of a statue, a frail and almost translucent alabaster statue, with eyes downcast on her sunken cheeks, and the corners of her reddened lips grown ironic. Her heavy hair was brushed back severely in great waves and caught loosely in a knot at the nape of her delicate throat. There was no sign of the relaxed, soft, dreaming Susanna. Except her hands; her hands lay in unguarded abandon on her lap.

Poledo broke off; he stared at Susanna as though he were seeing her for the first time; he rose and moved toward her as one hypnotized. He bent over her chair, and his voice was weighted with emotion as he said: "*Suzanne, chère Suzanne*, I came to offer you a renewal of my adoration, my friendship, I came to offer myself to you, in service,—in any way—relying on your memory of our beautiful friendship, *chère*—" His eyes were fixed on her hands, confidingly opened, palms up, like flowers to the bee, and having arrived at this point, he raised them quickly to his lips and kissed them alternately with lingering, clinging kisses,—the soft yet prickling kisses Susanna suddenly remembered so well. But she remembered them without humour, and she received them with repugnance.

Withdrawing her hands, she rose slowly away from him, determined to terminate this situation and the swelling distress it was engendering, in whose centre was the conviction that this man presumptuously believed his caresses to be more acceptable than Grodz's; that he was here to offer in substitution for her dead marriage his devotion and his kisses. And she was so furiously yet coldly annoyed with him, his devotion, his kisses, his conceit, his sham, that no other ideas or sentiments had a chance to arise in her. She walked away from him, and what she said she said

Love Days

with stinging lightness. "You mean well no doubt, *mon cher*; you see me pale and weak, you offer me your friendship. But I have no need of friendship. What I still need is a doctor and a cure to restore my physical strength so that I can again take an interest in friendship.—I confess freely to you that I take none whatsoever at this moment. Even the thought of our former pleasant acquaintance," she continued with flashing eyes and an ironic mouth, "cannot improve my appetite; no amount of what you have ever offered me as friendship,—going out to parties, pouring your tea, listening to your esoteric philosophy,—will improve my cough." Susanna, feeling that her temper would, if she continued, blaze up, stopped with a snap of her nervous fingers.

Turro who had viewed her spell-bound, shook himself out of his trance of astonishment. "But Suzanne, I understand nothing—in what have I displeased or failed you? Do you complain of the quality of my friendship? Do you deny me your friendship?"

"I refuse to discuss it, simply. I need no friendship for the moment, I need rest and a change of air." She sank into a chair like an inanimate thing. "Jeanne," she called, "Jeanne, prepare some tea and toast and bring me my salts."

"But, *chère amie*," Turro with heightened colour said, "if you wish me to go,—if I tire or excite you, you have but to say so, and I—"

The telephone rang; Susanna took up the receiver with a curt "pardon me." "Mr. Ewart? yes; ask him to come up." She smiled with relief; how fortunate that he was coming at this moment of unpleasant tangle;—the idea alone relaxed and calmed her. She turned to Turro: "Mr. Ewart is coming up—the playwright Ewart. Will you stay and meet him, at any rate, and have the cup of tea I ordered for you? I shall probably be going away in a few days, so that there will be no other opportunity.—I did not mean to be inhospitable,—I simply am not in a condition for anything but the simplest impersonal conversation. . . . If you think you are in a condition to furnish it," she added with more genuine amiability, "I hope you will give me the pleasure of taking a cup of tea before you go."

Turro, who had listened, astonished, offended and intrigued, first to the telephone episode, and then to Susanna's changed tone,

Susanna Moore's

remarked sarcastically: "Ewart is a friend, then, for whom you have some use, Suzanne,—whose services are accepted?"

"His services," Susanna replied with similar hot irony, "are plain little considerate words and deeds foreign to your repertoire. He does not express his friendship mainly in kisses."

But this speech had an unintended effect, for from somewhere in it Turro derived the hope that restored his enterprise, and he remarked eagerly again: "But that is because he does not adore you as I do, cruel Suzanne."

"Exactly," Susanna observed indifferently to the revived but hesitant and constrained Turro, who stood eying her with his handsome head lowered, much as a cat eyes its jumping prey.

Ewart knocked and entered.

"Hello, Claude!" Susanna smiled intimately, and stretched out her left hand informally. Ewart, gay in light grey homespun, his brilliant hair shining, a bunch of orchids in his hand, propelled his slim person over to Susanna with his sinewy and dancing gait, one of his aspects which in contrast with his domelike forehead diverted Susanna vastly. He bent over Susanna, put his gift on her knees without a word and held her hand for a moment, peering into her face anxiously with an anxiety that deepened as he saw, and remarked: "It seems to me that you're looking very well today, Sue."

Susanna burst out laughing; his verbal and his facial expressions were so obviously at variance. "Ewart, this is M. Poledo. A friend from New York," she added graciously.

Poledo's eyes were screwed up, examining Ewart inimically and satirically,—his colour was up—his anger was up; everything about him was obviously perturbed. He acknowledged the introduction with a formal bow and approached Susanna, speechless, with outstretched hand, to say good-bye. Susanna rose. "You must go before tea?" she asked gently; now that he was going, she felt quite kindly.

His angry face looked into her now gentle one, and perhaps it there encountered the old Susanna he had been fond of and she perhaps assuaged his anger at the new so unaccountable one. He spoke quickly in French: "You have disappointed me, my dear; I came to you as a friend; you treat me as an enemy. I understand nothing of all this, except that you are no longer your generous sweet self. When you realize what you have done, you

Love Days

will send for me, your friend;—before that I shall not return.”

“If I send for you, Turro,” Susanna answered with a deep flush and bitter lips and a voice that trembled, “it will be because the weather has changed and I no longer need a friend; because the sun is shining and I am again a child and want a playmate. . . . But I shall never be a child again; I shall never send for you. Good-bye.”

He grasped her hand, perplexed and pale with the intensity that communicated itself from her to him. “*Nous verrons, chère,*” he murmured, as they looked at one another for the last time.

Ewart, who had discreetly withdrawn to the window, seated himself near Susanna after the door closed. “I have some tickets for the Théâtre Royal for tonight’s première: but the weather is too bad for you to go out tonight, I’m afraid. This Parisian climate is the most execrable—” He went off into a dissertation on the subject, which took quite a time, and during which Susanna partially composed herself. But only partially: to adjust herself completely to what presented itself as life seemed to be becoming as impossible as was, in the fairy-tale, the task of emptying a lake with a spoon that had a hole in its centre.

She lay down on the lounge while Jeanne and Claude arranged tea; and Claude talked about the play that was opening tonight, its author, his other plays, other plays by other authors, anything and everything, while they sipped tea and ate “*zwiebak*.” “It’s too bad it’s so damned damp,” he grumbled, and paused.

“I don’t mind at all, I shouldn’t have gone anyway.”

“Why not?” he asked.

“You said it was a drama, didn’t you?”

“Yes.”

“Well I saw at least a dozen dramas and comedies before I was laid up, and they were all the same one in different clothes, and most insufferably false, and dull at that.— If it were a farce or the circus or a silly revue, it might have amused me.”

Ewart, having been on most of her theatre parties with her, was rather nonplussed, for he had gathered the impression that she loved tragedy, tolerated comedy, disliked farce, and was on no occasion bored. “I didn’t know the theatre bored you, you never seemed bored,” he said.

There was a pause. “I didn’t know it myself then, because it

Susanna Moore's

bored me less to go out than to stay at home. It bores me just as much now;—the idea of going anywhere bores me,—anywhere I've ever been." Susanna gave a troubled laugh, made a little gesture of perplexity, and lit a cigarette.

"You know you oughtn't to smoke, Susan." She shot him an acknowledging smile and continued to smoke. "Very well," he continued soothingly, "when you're quite well again I'll take you to places you've never been to, if you want to go,—places that won't bore you at any rate; that will either amuse or disgust you."

"You think that when one is well amusing things disgust one, and when one is ill, disgusting things amuse one." Susanna's fingers flicked her cigarette nervously, even Ewart could not help her back today to dull peacefulness. "I don't mean this—I don't know just what I mean—" She sat up a little. "I think I ought to release you from our bargain, Claude," her eyes were starry again and her mouth sweet and a little pathetic.

"Our bargain?"

"Yes, I have no more entertaining ideas and feelings to impart. I have hardly any at all, and they're not communicable: my mind is a kitchen garden, at best—"

"But it wasn't a bargain; it was your gift to me," Ewart objected soothingly.

"No you were to do your share, to be a friend, and you have done it,—you are doing it all the time,—and I can't pay any longer. You see, something is happening to me—I think I must be growing up. . . ." Her face was convulsed between tears and laughter and there was a catch in her throat and a suggestion of a chuckle as she went on: "I don't know whether it's pneumonia that has done it or you; but it's horrible to be grown up." And she buried her face in her cushions to hide her tears.

Ewart, disconcerted but bound to stick to his post, remembered that he was an inventive playwright and applied his imagination. "It doesn't look at this moment as if you were very grown up, Sue. If you're crying about your lost childhood, you ought to be doing it with tearless sobs or convulsions or on a manly breast or something, instead of celebrating it with a recurrence. Really the only thing wanting is that you should be kicking too."

Susanna, recognizing the discomfort that expressed itself in his overacting, as it were, pulled herself together, dried her eyes

Love Days

and tried to smile. "You're right. I feel better, however. I cry easily, you know,—it doesn't mean much. I cry at the theatre; especially at melodramas; at the worst parts, when I really feel nothing."

Ewart was professionally interested. "How is that—you cry and feel nothing?"

"Oh, I suppose my body is less personal than my spirit: it reacts in a more general way—"

"You're being cryptic, Susan."

"Well. . . ." Susanna made an effort, she felt that she owed it to him. "There's a theory of the emotions; you probably learned about it in college the same as I; it says that you get the physical reaction first, and then the conscious feeling. You see a bear, you shiver and tremble, you run, and when you get the chance, you feel afraid. I think a lot of my emotions get inhibited after the first physical stage. So I sometimes blush and have no accompanying feeling," Susanna smiled, and added with a mock-languishing look, "and I often look fonder than I feel."

Ewart only laughed, and then asked seriously: "What inhibits the feeling stage?"

Susanna shrugged her shoulders. "Whatever part of me does it, it certainly is a very personal part,—perhaps my critical self, perhaps too my desiring self,—whichever is the creative principle in one's make-up. I've thought of it in the picture of a shell, a covering, a house like a snail's for instance, clapped on, you know, when the physical alarm is given. One protects oneself from the wear and tear of the external, keeps oneself fresh for one's own purposes,—perhaps,—perhaps not. . . . I don't know." She shrugged her shoulders again. "But it worked quite well until recently. I was whole . . . myself . . . and there seemed a steady accrue of power to receive . . . and I was happy. And now—" she paused; Ewart waited silently. But there were things that could not be said even by one cynic to another. She could not say: "the experience of love has shattered the illusions that made me strong; the world has acquired a character of its own, irrespective of me, and has broken into my wholeness, has violated my imagination, has diffused my creative personality, and has made of me a seer of reality, a sufferer from reality, and a cynic." Yet she had thought out something of this kind. But

Susanna Moore's

she could not crudely state it: if he did not divine her there was no help. "And now," she ended, "I'm growing up."

But he, conscious of the evasion, took up the thread where it had got tangled, as far as he was concerned. "And when you looked furiously angry with the departing Moor, who looked furiously angry with me, didn't you feel anything either, Su-san," he teased.

"Yes," she said, "I did—I felt furiously angry." Ewart had plunged her back into reality; she felt mildly surprised: even pleasant promenades with him in the fields of fantasy terminated in arid regions of reality today. "He heard of the termination of my romance from Lucille, and he came to offer me his devotion as compensation—"

"But why reject an old friend's devotion? You wounded him badly."

Susanna looked at Claude in great surprise. He was so essentially tactful and delicate that a personal question was a rarity. But the pseudo-worried and impersonal inquiry in his face and the inclining bend of head and shoulders that seemed to register absorbed interest again seduced her to confidence, and she said: "But his devotion isn't friendship like yours, Claude; it isn't a genuine thing that is what it pretends to be—: his friendship is only a cloak for flirtation—"

"But probably he's in love with you," Ewart remarked dryly.

"In love—yes, exactly," Susanna flared up; "willing to let me play with him and go as far as I like,—that's his way of love—He hasn't enough conviction to throw the match and make the flame himself, his kind waits for an invitation to flame. . . . He explained all this to me before, when we were friends, but I did not then understand. I thought that he loved me with his spirit and others with the senses, and that I had the better part of his love. But I understand now. The spiritual part is the kindlings, or the phosphorous.—It's not essential; it's a sham," Susanna's voice was again cold and bitter; "and it's that which sickens me—the pretence. Love being what it is, one must make up one's mind for it, or against it,—it isn't for every one. But the pretence—the using of everything in the world that is beautiful as a decoy—to allure and cajole and push;—the cutting up of things lovely in themselves to serve to disguise its monotonous

Love Days

simplicity;—spoiling friendship, complete in itself, to inflate love with—And this man, who lays unscrupulous hands on anything to satisfy his instinct for sex play—” Susanna had on her lips to say “Grodz at least was honest, he scorned pretence,” but she shut her mouth and turned her head from Ewart, excited, miserable, and almost in tears again.

“I think you do the Moor an injustice, Susanna, you credit him with too much subtlety,” said the today so relentless Ewart. “He probably feels both ways about you, unaware of it, because there is no especial problem involved, if he’s an habitual Don Juan. Probably he is as devoted to you as his nature allows him to be, and doesn’t dream of deceiving you. You mustn’t be too sceptical you know, Susanna.” Susanna remained silent. “Your Moor looked as if he could have gouged my eyes out with one of your tea-spoons without a tremor, and presented them to you on the toast dish. . . . He also looked as though he could have eaten you up watered with his tears to preserve you from me.— I find him extremely picturesque, myself; he is a Moor, or an Arab, or an Egyptian, or something Oriental, isn’t he?”

“I don’t know what he is, and I don’t care.”

“He’s a black, black Moor,” Claude singsonged, “a very dangerous admirer, I think, Susan.”

“You don’t understand him in the least, I’m astonished to remark. He’s extremely feminine; it’s his chief charm.”

Ewart’s eyebrows shot up. “He’s well disguised then.”

“He has an Oriental strain in his looks and in what he calls his philosophy which he’s picked up here and there from scraps of Oriental and neo-Platonic systems. But he has a feminine strain in his sensitiveness and his intuition and in so male a creature it’s astonishing and arresting. And he is the happiest creature—no one can make him happy;—he’s happy with the knowledge that there are numberless fish in the sea, and that they all taste good to a hungry man. Really it’s quite simple. If he were a woman he’d be nothing but a—” she hesitated for the exact word, “a happy go lucky unprofessional courtesan.” Her voice trailed off, tired. “Let’s change the subject.”

But Ewart, obviously interested, remarked, flipping his cigarette: “It wouldn’t surprise me if you were a little in love with the handsome Moor; you romantify him so.”

Susanna raised herself upon her elbows, and stared at Ewart in

Susanna Moore's

astonishment. "What is the matter with you today, Claude," she asked bitterly; "you're failing me. I'm weak and ill and you've been my support, but today even with you there's no rest and peace; you're like the others, bothering, unsympathetic, hostile for all I know; what is the matter with you—with us—to-day?"

Ewart threw his cigarette into the fireplace and took Susanna's hand much as a doctor takes a patient's. "The matter is with you, Susanna." He hesitated; it was very apparent that he did not relish this rôle and that it cost him an effort to play it. "I don't give a damn whether people are one way or another; I'm really a cynic, you know, by nature and circumstance. But you are sweet. You are sweet *and* intelligent, Susan, and here you are suddenly transformed into a cynic with a kind of acid and bitter cynicism. . . . It's ridiculous; you can't expect me to be sympathetic."

They looked at each other.

Ewart gazed uncomfortably at Susanna with his peering, pseudo-worried eyes, and the expression that his old young face wore when he was drawn further into the heart of things than he cared to go. And Susanna understood his expression; she realized that he recoiled from the intimately personal; that such incursions vitiated the purity of his singleness; she understood how he prized it, his independence,—it was for this that she found him so pleasant, so satisfying. And he was sacrificing his aloofness to read her a lecture, because—it flashed over Susanna brightly—because he thought himself responsible for her condition.

A fine smile spread over her face from her curled lips to her blind eyes, as pressing his hand and withdrawing hers, she said: "Listen, Claude. I'm growing up and you have nothing to do with that. The day I met you was the most terrible and miserable day of my life." Claude looked startled; Susanna smiled quickly. "Before I met you—I mean—I was in a state far worse than cynical,—simply full of incredible and ununderstandable pain. And after that I was almost unconscious in helpless confusion. . . . Cynicism is a philosophy, and all philosophy is a comfort. If you have infected me at all, you've helped me to a philosophy, and I've so much to be grateful for. But don't think that it is you who have made a cynic of me. You did help me, unknowingly, from the sickening pain of disillusion to the lesser

Love Days

pain of self-consciousness; you did make of my baffling experience a case in a category, you know; you helped to fit it into a universe which you illumined here and there like a flashlight.— This is all rather cryptic, but I can't be clearer. It's clear to me, because I've thought so much about it; but you'll have to take it on faith that you haven't coloured the real world you happened to disclose. You really haven't blackened it for me, really not. I am at bottom uninfluenced by you in that sense. I see with my own eyes; I see across my shattered illusions about myself, with which you must admit you have nothing to do."

Ewart looked interested, but kept silent. Susanna pondered for a moment before she continued: "You know, thoughts are so horribly rapid, and I've had so horribly much time to think, as I've lain in bed too weak to do anything else,—perhaps too weak to do that very successfully. . . . If we must attribute the colour of my state of mind to any one influence, let's attribute it to the state of my body; let's suppose that with regained strength it will change back into rose automatically . . . if we need that comfort. . . ." Susanna smiled ironically. "But you can't force me back into the rhythm of my nature which, as you say, is not cynical. No, one can be forced out of it, but one cannot be forced back again, not even by oneself. . . . Perhaps one grows back gradually with strength somehow . . ." She ended the subject with "The Doctor wants me to go to the Riviera; I don't want to go there, but I suppose I ought to go somewhere. I'm going to talk it over with him tomorrow;—I rather incline to Switzerland. . . ."

Ewart had paid close attention to Susanna's lengthy argumentative discourse and had during its course looked interested, entertained, relieved, perplexed, and unconvinced. He now inquired with whom she was going. With her maid—her maid alone? He seemed to disapprove. He was not sure that she was doing a prudent thing in living alone in this hotel here, either. There might be talk; since he had taken in the full significance of the Moor's glance, this had occurred to him. Feeling himself to be on delicate ground, he did not care to suggest to Susanna any dangerous complications in her situation for her impending divorce action; he made only the faintest allusion to his fears. But Susanna astonished him by understanding and remarking unconcernedly: "Don't worry. Once Grodz has agreed to cast me off, he has cast me off; he's no longer interested. And the others:

Susanna Moore's

I've never guided myself by the directions of others, and I shan't now." She added: "I'll take you to Switzerland with me, if you like. . . ." She smiled sweetly, yet a little ironically.

Ewart flipped his cigarette viciously; Susanna who was watching him, amused, thought that he looked disconcerted for a moment.

"Would you really be indifferent to the scandal—the scandal of being considered my mistress?" he asked crudely, more crudely than was necessary, but with intense curiosity.

This was Susanna's turn to be disconcerted; yet her embarrassment was that of surprise only. "No, of course not" she replied, "I should hate it. I should hate to be looked upon as any one's mistress; not because of the social consequences, but because of constantly being reminded of so intrinsically ugly a situation. . . . But—" she smiled at him frankly and again a little ironically, "I might brave its horrors for the sake of your society—You've been my drug, you know, Claude, in this general collapse; you know what happens when one is suddenly deprived of one's drug—"

"I do," he interrupted dryly, "but do you? Have you ever taken drugs?"

Susanna stared at him to see whether he was serious, and burst out laughing. "And I suppose you think you know something about me! I never was bored, nor discouraged, nor low-spirited for one moment before I was married, and I only knew I was any of these things the day we met,—when had I need for drugs? After that I was drugged with activity, then with illness, then with thinking, and now with you. . . . But if you are removed, who knows! And why should you be removed, beneficent drug that you are. . . . If you can afford the time, certainly I want you to come to Switzerland with me, scandal notwithstanding. . . ."

Susanna had risen; there was a challenge in her eyes and in her pose, as she stood before him. He too rose, and for a moment it looked as though he might accept her challenge;—he was obviously fascinated, her mystery had obviously deepened for him. But the common sense with which he seemed to treat life, and which enabled him to create his uncommon nonsense, asserted itself and stifled any desire he might have felt to play with her and make her taste the consequences of her eccentrically reckless indifference.

"But you can have me with you, and avoid scandal by taking a

Love Days

chaperon. It's really quite simple you know, unless you insist on the scandal to make the reality more real.— Of course, if you insist. . . ." His voice trailed off in a singsong at the end of his sentences, it died into space, as it were.

Susanna was amused by his intonation,—even now she laughed. "I suppose I don't really believe in the scandal; it seems so inappropriate;—that's why neither you nor it shocks me. And I can't think of a chaperon over here,—unless Lucille Chapu would come."

"No," he objected, "we'd have to amuse her; we shouldn't be free to do as we pleased."

Susanna shrugged her shoulders. "You see, we're babes in the woods together." She laughed, and looked at him expectantly.

Ewart was leaning against the mantel, smoking, pondering. "I might ask my mother to come over; she'd do anything I asked her to,—she's rather a dear; you'd like her."

Susanna flushed; this was unexpectedly sweet of him. "You're a dear, too, to want it. I'm sure I'd like her. I'd like any mother of yours," Susanna smiled very sweetly, "any kind of a mother of yours. But it wouldn't do."

"Why?" he asked.

"She wouldn't like me,—can't you see that?"

He remained silent.

"She wouldn't understand, after seeing me." Susanna flushed again. "And even if she understood that you weren't in love with me, she couldn't possibly believe that I am not in love with her extraordinary son,—or, at the very least, wanting him to fall in love with me. . . ." Susanna was now enjoying the situation. "You know your own history, and I know mine, so we can take this wonderful accident of friendship for granted. . . . Any one else in the world might understand how we can be attached to one another like two stars—held to and from one another by the same force,—any one but your mother. Yes, Claude?"

"Yes," he mumbled, "I suppose you're right," and gave her a searching and intrigued glance.

She laughed happily. "But I have an idea;—we might take a *dame de compagnie*, a professional one, you know; some trained nurse *ex officio*. Dr. Devereux must know of some one of that

Susanna Moore's

kind, some one to keep me from consumption, and the world from being deceived.— I'll ask him tomorrow."

"Consumption—is there any danger?" he asked, newly interested.

Susanna laughed heartily. "You said 'any danger' exactly as though you meant 'any chance!' Should I really charm you more if I had consumption, Claude?" Susanna was growing more and more amused; Ewart himself laughed his nice and harmless laugh. "I can't promise," she pursued. "My father died of it and Dr. Devereux urges me passionately to go South, and I feel quite queer and rather dreadful today,—but— If we had an encyclopaedia here with a description of the symptoms, I could perhaps give you some guarantee. . . ."

"Oh," Claude remarked kindly and coolly. "I know the symptoms; I know a great deal about diseases, they fascinate me. I've had quite a lot of them myself, and enjoyed having them once; but I have a horror of having them over again, so I avoid them."

"Consumption would be all right if you were to catch it from me; it can be had but once, I believe, chronically or fatally. If you are devoted to me," she continued a little hysterically, "and if consumption can be had in Switzerland, in the company of so sympathetic a companion, I'll do my best by you—"

"But you won't succeed, Susan," he said mildly, "you aren't fashioned for that kind of success."

"Perhaps not," she replied, smiling. "But then, I'm not fashioned for life either."

"Oh yes," he said, "you're fashioned to get well and plump and go travelling with whomever you invite, because—" he paused.

"Because?" she asked, interested.

"Because you're not grown-up, and you still have the charm of adolescence."

"I hope you're right," Susanna said, and there seemed to be peace between them.

Silence descended upon the room as Susanna lay back on the lounge with closed eyes, while Claude glanced over some periodicals on the table;—silence broken only by the irregular snippings of Jeanne's scissors from the room beyond, and the regular ticking of the bisque clock on the mantel.

Love Days

After a while the clock struck and they discovered that it was eight o'clock. Susanna suggested ordering a hasty dinner for Claude so that he would not miss much of the play. He however, objected to this in his mild but decided fashion. He objected to dispatching a hasty dinner as her guest, and expressed a lack of interest in the play. The French theatre, he averred, with its long intermissions in which people read their evening papers in the dim light of the unaired hall . . . and so forth. His professional interest of before seemed to have waned.— Susanna concluded that he was the politest of men, and when she was given the choice between having him go at once without dining, and having him remain to dine at her leisure, dropping in at the theatre for the end of the play, she graciously chose the latter alternative, although she was exhausted with fatigue and tantalized by visions of bed,—as Tannhäuser was by visions of the Venusberg, she thought, and yet quite differently. . . .

She ordered a very Epicurean meal, for Claude's cool and yet considerate attitude toward food still amused her, and she had a vague impression that her own easy intimacy with it rather impressed him. So she ordered several delicacies, oyster salad, and canard Rouennaise, and she chose Pommery brut for him and Moët et Chandon for herself. "Decidedly the trained ex-nurse dame de compagnie ought to be functioning already," he commented.

He repeated this remark when, upon the arrival of dinner, Susanna, who had dressed appeared in a new acquisition, a snaky shining cloth of silver gown, her hair almost iridescent in the electric light, her face excessively pale, her eyes dark and huge in their smudged frames in her emaciated face, and her lips intensely reddened in the Parisian style. As she glided across the room and relaxed into a chair like a shining snake, Ewart might well have thought that Sarah Bernhardt, rediviva modern, young and beautiful, might have achieved this in the third act of *Camille*. But he might well have thought, too, that Susanna as Susanna looked feverish and quite as ill as she looked beautiful, and that it probably was imperative for her to hurry away from this climate, and that he might have a share in expediting this event.

Over their dinner, of which Ewart partook interestedly yet

Susanna Moore's

coolly (as he partook of her, it occurred to Susanna pleasantly), he entertained her with tales of people he had known; some strange and grotesque, others strange and macabre,—all strange, however, with a freakish strangeness that Susanna had never before relished. Yet now, as she listened to him, fascinated and astonished, she thought these people he described the only distracting note that she had recently heard, the only note that did not beat into her head with killing monotony. She almost wished these horrors and freaks into her life to divert her from the reality.

After the table had been cleared, and they were still sipping champagne, Susanna remarked: "I seem to remember a scene such as this tête-à-tête supper in one of your plays, though I don't remember the details." Ewart recalled the play and the situation to her memory, and ended by asking her whether she had ever been under the influence of drink.

"Not yet," Susanna laughed. "No drugs—no drink. Nothing but bourgeois virtues. But perhaps you will change all that: I may come back from Switzerland a most unconventional person."

"You're the most unconventional person I know now," he observed.

"Oh, Claude!"

"But you are; don't you think so yourself?"

"I don't think I've ever thought of myself under that category at all; it's queer, I suppose, because I occasionally think of others in that way."

"No," he said, "that's just it. Most people mean currently moral or immoral, when they say conventional or unconventional, while as a matter of fact the most immoral are often the most conventional; they transgress in a perfectly impersonal way, with an eye to law and custom. In the sense of personal, which seems to me to be the sense of unconventional, the sense of making one's own laws according to the needs of one's personality, you are the most personal—well, woman at any rate—that I know." Ewart pronounced all this as though it were being drawn out of him; he had an instinctive dislike for expressing views so personally and directly, and he could do so in Susanna's case only because her interest in the opinions of others on herself was so slight.

"Oh, well, perhaps—I don't know; my inclinations sometimes

Love Days

correspond with conventions, and sometimes they don't, I suppose. Do you drink?" she asked, remembering Pol's description of the Roman party.

"Aren't you ever interested in what others think of you?" he asked, disregarding her question.

"Why of course I am, feverishly," she drawled.

"You're nothing of the kind, Su-san; you scarcely listen politely when one goes to the trouble to add to your store of knowledge about yourself," he teased her.

"That depends; I remember lots of things I've been told about myself, foolish and wise; I remember them when they're pretty."

"Prove it, Su-san."

"What do you mean? I should quote something?"

"Yes, but don't make it up."

"Of course not; I shouldn't think of adding to your store of knowledge."

"Well—"

"Well—; very well;—I've been told that I'm like an electric light." And she looked it at this moment, in glittering silver, transparent in her pallor, slim, straight, with glinting lights in her shining hair.

"How so? Aren't you going to be more expansive, Su-san?"

She fell back in her chair, crossed her legs, and looking to Heaven, warmed to her task. "It was said that I am like an electric light in a protective globe; that I attract life as the globe-encased light attracts moths; that no onslaught of life's adventures can dim or extinguish me, for I am not a candle nor a flame, but an electric light in a protecting globe. I shine, I sparkle, and at times I become incandescent, and when I'm dark it's because the current has been turned off. . . . I shine, I excite, I attract life—: but I am no unprotected flame: I cannot be extinguished."

There was a pause. Susanna closed her eyes. "You're sure you did not say it yourself?" Claude asked.

"No," she replied, "a man who was mistaken said it."

There followed another pause.

"I want to know whether you drink too much, Claude," Susanna repeated.

"Too much for what?" he asked, bringing his attention back to her.

Susanna Moore's

"Too much for the preservation of your normal, full consciousness—the consciousness of your cynicism," she laughed.

"Very seldom. Only when I'm frightfully bored or annoyed. It can never occur when I'm alone with you, so don't worry," he said with his pleasant smile.

"But I'm told that you're marvellously brilliant when you have drunk too much. Am I never going to see you brilliant like that, and how shall I know you if I miss that phase?" she teased him.

"But you're not studying me, Susan," he said dryly, "I'm studying you."

"But since you've taught me to see so nakedly, since you have peeled my eyes, as Huckleberry Finn says, how can you prevent me from studying you, if I want to."

"I can't prevent you from studying me, but I can prevent you from finding anything out," he laughed.

"But why should you?" she asked seriously.

"You know the story of the pupil who thought he had his master's grasp of magic, and conjured up powers he could not control and was overwhelmed by," he asked patronizingly.

"But the master came to his aid; and I fail to see why knowledge should overwhelm me—"

"It's threatening to overwhelm you already, Susan, my dear; it's making you cynical."

"But the important thing is that it is maturing me, Claude," Susanna retorted.

"Oh no," Claude stuck to his point, "it's transforming you because you're not mature."

"We don't agree, but it makes no real difference in our friendship, does it . . . it makes it no less pleasant?" Susanna said sweetly.

"I should say it makes a real difference: it makes the friendship charming," Claude mumbled.

"Claude, please go to the theatre now. I want to go to bed, I'm half dead with fatigue."

Ewart rose with alarm. "I'm terribly sorry; you should have said so before, Susan. You're not feeling ill, are you?" He remembered that she had eaten almost nothing.

"Not at all; and having you here did me good. Only I'm tired and it's late, and you might as well see the rest of the play."

Love Days

He held her hand in farewell, looking anxiously at her with his eyes that dipped into whatever they looked at. Susanna smiled sweetly: "I think you care a little how I feel, anyway, as myself . . . not just as a specimen. . . ."

"I'm very fond of you, Susanna, in a way;" he smiled his nice smile.

"I like your way," she said sweetly.

"Then everything's all right and I'll expect a telephone-call after you've seen the Doctor; I'll be home all morning, working—We might lunch and talk things over—"

"Yes, very well."

"Goodnight."

"Goodnight, Kindheart," Susanna drawled ironically.

"Goodnight, goodnight Susanyway," he singsonged.

They smiled at each other.

Within five minutes Susanna was in bed, the lights were extinguished, the window open on the silent court and her body sunken deliciously into the pillows. The ease and relaxation come to her were almost voluptuous, and she lay quite still, absorbed in her breathing and her heart-beats, expecting in a moment to fall into deep sleep.

But the moment lengthened and sleep did not come. She concluded that she was so tired that she was too tired to sleep,—this, she knew, did happen . . . when rested she would sleep. Or it might be the champagne; champagne was sometimes a disguised stimulant. And it made no difference, really; it was quite well to lie awake, aware of nothing but voluptuous ease. . . .

Slowly, however, other thoughts crept into her privacy.— First, the picture of the last scene. The shining silver of the table laden with things to eat, that—no matter how they tasted—looked romantically rich and exotic;—herself a shining artificial streak;—Claude, with his slim body and his ancient eyes, a pale wraithy person enclosing in his grey and self-contained self showers of mental fireworks that, when liberated, could hiss and sparkle about him, and that came from where the flame of love had once glowed. So he himself had said, and Susanna again wondered what had extinguished it. What woman or women had made of this young man so cynical and yet so realistic a philosopher? . . . If now, he had explained himself as a glacier or a barren peak un-

308

Susanna Moore's

able, like herself, to blossom into love, she would have understood, of course. . . . But he said that he was a burnt-out volcano. . . . Comparisons only ridiculed anyway, unless they were so apt that one's critical judgment was sucked in by their aptness. . . . And these comparisons were really rather silly. . . . In fact he seemed rather unique: hackneyed classifications did not seem to contain him. . . . You might stick him in, but he was sure to pop out again, like a Jack-in-the-box. . . . Yet he ought himself to know whether he was classifiable,—and mentally of course he was, for he was just a cynic. . . . But in some more comprehensive sense he was enjoyable as something unique and subtly and delicately wrought for reaction to life. So, at least, she vaguely felt. . . .

Perhaps he would some day explain himself to her, seeing how ununderstanding he thought her! Susanna smiled. Yes, he thought her adolescent, naïve, artificially influenced by his point of view. He did not seem to grasp that a widened experience had opened her eyes to a world dismal and empty and boring, like her marriage, and that her illness was keeping it thus, and that his rôle had been to bring order and coolness and clearness and truth, yes, truth into this sickening, chaotic, shrunken world; that his philosophy and his cool kindness, and his desire and his power to be with her and yet to remain at a distance, where she wished him to remain,—that all this had helped her. Had helped her as an artificial leg helps him who has lost his own. . . . But he seemed to be firmly convinced that it was otherwise, and he had begun to take a responsible interest in her.

And here Susanna suddenly thought to realize what this meant and implied . . . It meant that Ewart could no longer have the free and unadulterated intercourse with her that he had desired; it meant that he would now have to manage himself, and herself, for her benefit . . . It meant that he would cease to take pleasure in her society . . . that something had shifted and gone wrong. . . .

She was too tired to think it through, and she did not try, but even without thinking she knew that she could not retain him for her comfort after he had ceased to derive profit from her society, and that on whatever his profit and pleasure depended, it was no longer there for him since she was in his eyes growing like him in outlook. Yes, she suddenly felt and knew that his interest in her was bound up in her differing from him, in her offering him

Love Days

novelty of feeling and point of view. This, she now recalled sharply, was the object of their association on his side. And on hers, she was to have of him what she wanted, and she had wanted his mental outlook peeled of sentiment and sham, and she had taken it to make her state of soul bearable, and she had thereby rendered herself useless to him. . . .

So it was really at an end—their agreement, she told herself with gathering clearness. She could take nothing more from him, since she had in his eyes lost her value for him. And, as a matter of fact, she wanted nothing further— Certainly not any sacrifice,—although he seemed willing though not anxious to sacrifice his independent, un-responsible, un-scrupulous relations, and assume the responsibility for her conversion to cynicism.

Susanna, in the course of this train of thought came to complete clearness as to whither it was leading. To an impasse,—to renunciation. . . .

Yes, that was it: she had arrived at the wall of renunciation.—This was dreadful, and yet it was natural in its dreadfulness. Yes, it was natural, this greater and greater abridgment of personal life, it was natural in so abridged and empty a world. . . .

She wondered a little at the contrast between her continued physical ease and her new spiritual bereavement, and at the comparative lack of emotion she experienced in facing what she yet knew with full awareness to be naked loneliness. Perhaps—she thought—she was too devitalized to feel anything intensely,—perhaps misery held the charity that it hardened you against its onslaughts to come. For she thought, on the contrary, to feel a certain satisfaction in being deprived of the warmth of human sympathy she had derived from this cool source: her world was now so simply and completely ugly and empty. . . .

She lay pondering, and she arrived quite easily at resolutions. She would get a companion at once and elope with her to Switzerland. She would ostensibly postpone her departure for treatment, and then suddenly she would be gone, and there would be a letter for Claude instead of her burdensome self. And he would go back to America, and perhaps he would write to her . . . But even if he wrote, he would not write anything . . . But perhaps he would come back next year, and then perhaps she would again be different, and he too might have changed, and they would again be something to one another. . . .

Susanna Moore's

And where would she then be? . . . She averted her eyes from the future, and she was so without any desire or hope whose fulfilment she could place in it, that the future itself seemed unreal.

There was just one thing to look to, she took pains to tell herself, and that was her health. From it, restored, would flow the rest of earthly goods. . . .

She concentrated on the pleasant sensations she derived from her weakened body,—on her relaxed muscles, her quick and superficial breathing, her increasing heaviness and drowsiness,—until, finally, she fell asleep.

ANOTHER snowy day!

Susanna looked out of the window and saw the while lake in the distance, white meadows and trees skirting it, and nearer by white lawns and bushes, and in between and out beyond and all around white dotted air.

Ever since she had been here, for three weeks every day: white monotony. Sometimes a blue sky and brown streaks through the landscape, and clumps of evergreen showing; sometimes a grey sky, and less green and brown; and sometimes, like today, a white sky and everything snow-dusted. But always white monotony.

She found this scene so tiresome indeed that for a flash of time she felt sorry for it and a little embarrassed, as one feels for an unchangingly dull person who has been forced into one's society. She excluded the lake from her commiseration, to be sure,—one could not pity a magnificent lake even in times of eclipse; but she included the small white and grey portion of water visible from here, the portion that hung together with the small banal portion of ground between it and the hotel.

If it were not for Rettigheim, and for the sudden inspiration that led her to express the monotony and colourlessness of her mind in her clothes and become a "white lady," she could not stand this place—this life.

Life! If this was life, what was "death-in-life"? Yes, this was the setting for death. This must be the real reason why sick people came among these scenes. They could here pass from one state to another without a jolt. Death kindly met them half way—more than half way. Disguised as life, as quiet, peaceful life—With cold crisp air as its mask. . . .

She ought, no doubt, to be grateful to the cold, crisp air; Dr. Guyau found her improved. Perhaps she was—no sick person could be quite as full of dislike for everything as she was—everything but her white idea.

She looked with some affection at her white cashmere and ermine frock, made in Russian style. . . . In a few minutes Mrs. Collins would bring in her ermine coat and cap, and open the

Love Days

windows, and here she would sit in a long chair, wrapped up, waiting for nothing in the world but to have her coat taken off again and the windows closed and Mrs. Collins exit.—Except a possible visit from one of the hotel guests.

She had never understood why people who happened to meet in hotels bothered about one another for no other reason than their fortuitous meeting—: she understood it now. They broke into something even more uninteresting than themselves—at least more uninteresting than their act of breaking in. It was the breaking in that was desirable, not themselves . . . It really made no especial difference what their positive qualities were, it was their negative one of not being the empty hour and the ever present cover of snow that made of them a diversion. And they came to her room in the same spirit in which she received them—to escape monotony. For they had nothing to say to her, nor she to them; nothing that made the slightest difference.

Perhaps they enjoyed looking at her clothes! She caressed her gown with her eyes; and her white shoes and stockings and her white hands with pearls on the fingers . . . But she wanted to see her face, and she rose slowly and walked slowly to the mirror, and greeted it with a smile. The smile was a little pathetic; she seemed to cling to her face and body in some pathetic fashion, as though they were her only sources of pleasant feeling.

She looked much as she had looked a few weeks before in Paris; thin and pale, with blue veins showing, her cheek-bones accentuated, and a glitter in her eyes which were nearer and keener, greyer and darker. And her mouth curled up a little ironically. A face on the defensive—

And with her huge pearls in her ears and her copper waves brushed back and gathered in a knot she looked a little like a mythical Russian princess, for whom there was no further mystery in life.

She herself saw and recognized the mask that pneumonia and disillusion and bewilderment had given her, and it was the only gift that fate had bestowed on her in these recent events from which she derived any satisfaction. One could look upon one's body in this æsthetic way, she reflected; one could see it detached from all other considerations, merely as beauty, and get the thrill,—but not so one's soul. Or could one see one's soul in the

Susanna Moore's

same way—æsthetically, objectively, as a spectacle? If so, one would have to find the parallel to the mirror— Where was there such a thing—an objectifying mirror of the soul? Not in one's self-consciousness, and not in one's reflection in the soul of another. Other souls too were prejudiced; were not mechanical objective instruments like mirrors. . . .

Probably it would interest and amuse her if she could see and grasp her new soul as she did her new body; but she couldn't. She could only feel it from the inside, as it were, and it felt empty and dull and rejecting; rejecting. Just as her body from the inside felt empty and devitalized with dull, cloggy, soggy sensations . . . Though it looked beautiful enough and interesting and mysterious. . . .

She sat gazing at herself absent-mindedly. Perhaps her hair ought to be white too. Perhaps it would grow white in this death-like atmosphere . . . And there ought to be a Russian wolfhound. But she could not bear animals as constant companions. And she suddenly thought of her parrot of a day, and with this thought there came tumbling into her mind her green study over there and her books and her friends and her parties and herself,—a young, warm, gay, placid, happy Susanna dipped in some wonderful fluid like an elixir of her personal life. . . .

Susanna flushed— If that was real, had been real, how could this be real; and if this—this unreality, this emptiness, this death-in-life was real—if she, Susanna, was all here and could not feel herself as anything more than this shrunk soul, how could that other life ever have been real?— Tears, nostalgic tears for that past, for that past Susanna, whether real or unreal, came into her eyes . . . Whether real or unreal, she knew that she had withered into this Susanna, as the green leaf withers into the sear leaf when the climate for which it was meant changes to another; as flowers wither when cut from their roots by a foreign hand, no matter how tender. . . .

And she was all there was left of that past Susanna. . . .

Susanna, looking at her image in the mirror saw that the Russian princess had tears trickling down her cheeks. She flushed again. You're getting maudlin, she approximately apostrophized herself: You're getting to be like old Miss Delancey who talks about her young selves as though they were her dead children

Love Days

by some wonderful husband she loved. You're as sick as you look or you would be ashamed of being sentimental before me. You're Susanna, all of the Susannas, and all of them were necessary to make you; and if you're different, it's life that has made you so. Life doesn't agree with you, as the sun doesn't agree with some kinds of fruit, but shrinks them and spoils their flavour. You're the same Susanna without your love of life. Life has begun to maltreat you, and you no longer love nor respect it. But you're free;—there's something in that. You're free, Susanna, remember that—

Yes, she continued to think,—more informally—, yes, if one was free of what one did not cherish, she, who did not give a damn for life anymore, was now free in a new sense. . . . Yet, she did not feel this new freedom. . . . She still felt the chains of love that bound her to those former Susannas, all happy ones, and the ache of her severance from them. And she felt the discomfort and failure of her marriage and all it implied, and she felt the hostility of fate's present attitude to her and the tricks it employed and which she could not detect, and the ugliness, monotony and emptiness with which it was crushing her. . . . And she felt most of all her own general hostility to everything. . . .

Mrs. Collins appeared with the ermine coat and cap, tucked Susanna into a chair, and opened the windows out into the frosty air.

"Real Christmas weather, now, isn't it, this morning, Mrs. Moore," she said cheerily. "Are you nice and comfortable, dear?"

"I'm comfortable," Susanna replied. "If you like the weather, go for a walk, Mrs. Collins. I don't need anything Jeanne can't look after."

"Well, since the Doctor isn't coming today, I think I'll run down to Geneva and do some Christmas shopping. I can catch the eleven-thirty and come home on the four-thirty. Is there anything I can do for you, Mrs. Moore?"

"If you will be so kind— Let's make a list." Susanna gave her orders. The list turned out long enough; things for herself; scarfs and sweaters for friends at home, although they would not reach them before the New Year at the earliest; boxes of fruit for Dr. Devereux and other French friends. Ewart's present she would have to think about.

Susanna Moore's

And how she would like to send Pol something, something special and beautiful,—a Tanagra statuette, for instance. She might say “from one victim to another.” Although he was no victim, and probably he did not even feel as though he were. Probably he was enjoying his artistic triumph in London, and having a hundred contacts with life and with people to make him happy. Yes,—but had he forgotten her—and could he be quite happy until he had forgotten her? Were men so different from women? Probably. They seemed so to her; they had always seemed so to her. The things that made them happy were different, and the quality of their happiness was different. Certainly in the matter of love. . . . If he was unhappy it was because he had not found love in their relationship; because she had not loved him enough to warm him to love. But love itself he found beautiful, and he would meet with it again in some other relation. But she was unhappy because she found love unbeautiful and dull and a little ridiculous, and could not love love. . . .

She had loved him a little, and he had loved her a little; it was she who was worse off. Yes, it would have been fitting to send him a Tanagra Amourette. . . .

Her gloved hands played with the soft white fur on her knees, stroking it to and fro, and she watched the snow-flakes blow into the room and melt on the blue carpet. And, gradually, her thoughts were lulled to sleep in this white atmosphere . . . her last conscious fancy was “trance-in-life” . . . after that she fell into the state it described.— If thoughts and fancies subsisted in this state, they subsisted pressed together into an indistinguishable mass that came and went rhythmically before it could be grasped and held.— So, for instance, Christmas floated in and out of Susanna's tranced mind emptily,—if it held meaning it made it below the threshold of consciousness.— She stroked her fur and watched the flakes, and thought that she was breathing in strength and health.

She was aroused by the announcement of a caller, Baron Rettigheim.

“Show him up,” she said, and her voice held a little animation and her eyelids fluttered. But she continued to stroke her fur and look out at the snow blowing about slowly like snow in a reversed glass ball.

Love Days

Her visitor entered. He strode over to her, lifted her hand for the formal salute of his lips and lounged over the back of her chair, stage fashion.

"And how is the crystal lady this morning?" he asked briskly and condescendingly.

"I'm afraid it will be too cold for you in here," Susanna said across her shoulder. "I'm being healthy with the windows open, as you see. It's even colder in here than usual, dear Baron."

"A crystal lady belongs in an icy atmosphere, æsthetically speaking, at any rate. . . . It is her true background,—especially when she has red hair; flaming, enflaming red hair."

Susanna wondered how close he was to her hair.

"Come around here and show yourself," she ordered; "and let me see whether you really think my copper hair is red."

He walked slowly forward and stood before her at the window. He was tall and large, wore tweeds, was groomed like an Englishman, spoke like an Englishman, smoked like an Englishman, and yet to Susanna he looked more like the German he was by parentage than the Englishman he was by upbringing. There was a sharper, keener, more intelligent look in his eyes than the big Englishman of corresponding physique would have had or achieved, she thought; there was a finer forehead and a thicker neck; in his body there was less grace and agility, but more energy and formal discipline:—his body was more self-conscious, as his mind was more subtle, than its English counterpart would have been. But superficially he was the wealthy English landowner and sporting man; handsome, self-possessed, self-satisfied, self-contained, indomitable.

"You've never paid me a morning call before, have you?" Susanna asked, looking up to the top of his six foot two.

"I'm not really paying you one now," he answered slowly; "I've come to ask whether I might spend this afternoon with you, crystal lady, whether you would be generous to me this afternoon and let me have tea with you alone?" He looked at her, she was quite apathetic. "I've a special reason for my request."

"I imagined you always had special reasons for everything, including requests," Susanna drawled; "I can't imagine you moving a finger without a special reason.— Do you?"

He laughed; he laughed a hearty laugh with an undertone of ad-

Susanna Moore's

miration; the veins stood out on his forehead while he looked her full in the face as though his laugh were a bond between them.

"You laugh as though you were amused at being detected in something by me," Susanna continued. "What have I detected—that you are unusually reasonable and clever? Don't you like being it?"

"Oh yes," he laughed again, "I like being it, all right, but I don't like to be known to be it;—when you're known to be clever you've jolly well got to be twice as clever.— But I don't mind being found out by you, crystal lady. I don't mind anything from you. On the contrary, I prefer you to know my secrets, if it brings you nearer to me;—if it does—"

The snow blew in on him in a little gust of wind; he put up the collar of his jacket, leaned against the wall with legs crossed, and restored his hands to his pockets.

"All you have to do to have me know all about you," Susanna drawled, looking up to him and down again at her stroking hands, and up again at him, movements which her slow-moving eyes made very lovely,—“all you have to do is to be a pendant to what you seem to think me,—a crystal gentleman, and then I shall see right through your transparency, and tell you what is there;—what you already know.” She smiled an enigmatic little smile; he laughed again, and the veins stood out on his forehead and a flint-like light shot through his sharp eyes.

"You charm and enchant me, ivory lady; you and your flaming hair and the flames your mind strikes. It's fortunate, by God, that your temperament doesn't strike into flames as well." His voice was deep and fine, he spoke with the quiet modulation, the restraint, of the Englishman, but in its depths there was another, stronger vibrancy.

"No doubt you mean fortunate for me?" Susanna opened satiric eyes on him, fastened them on his and left them there while she pursued some private vagrant thoughts. How ridiculous men were with their crude tricks, how they gave themselves away . . . even this clever man. . . . How he gave it away that he needed the ardour and flame of a woman to incite his own. Beggars, all. . . .

"I didn't hear what you said, I beg your pardon. What was it?" she asked, coming back to him.

Love Days

"That's too easy a way out, ivory lady."

"I was thinking of something else; I assure you I didn't hear you; don't you believe me?"

"I do, damn it.— I asked you in a poetical way whether I was going to be received alone this afternoon?"

"Why alone, Baron? Where is the Baroness?"

"That's it: she's gone to Geneva to fetch her cousin, the cousin I've told you about, Hugh Whittleby. She's deserted me for the day."

"Is that the only reason why you want to come—because you've been deserted? You're not as gallant as I feared."

"I put it in that way because you know that there's nothing I want to do more than come." The veins on his forehead stood out again; Susanna found their goings-on fascinating.

"That's not very astonishing here," she replied childishly, "where there's nothing else that's at all nice to do. Especially in this weather;—though I like bad weather here, somehow; I can stay in with a good conscience, and my legs are so pleased when I stay in; they seem to hate to carry me out; they're much more fastidious than I am."

"You're not feeling as strong as you ought to, Mrs. Moore, I'm afraid.— Whittleby's a doctor, you know. He might have some better advice to give you than Guyau. Especially as—" He paused.

"Well?" Susanna asked.

"Whittleby had consumption for a while; got it after an attack of pneumonia. He's now an authority on the bronchia and lungs. And you're weak after pneumonia, so he'd probably be particularly helpful."

"I haven't a trace of consumption, thank you just the same. Is he coming here, to this hotel?"

"I know you haven't, Mrs. Moore, or I should never have spoken of it to you—surely you must know that?" he said softly, but failing to get any response, he added dryly: "Is he coming here? I should say so. He's my wife's great chum, you know; come out to make her Christmas cheerful."

"That's nice for her," Susanna said. "Think of having two men one likes to play with at Christmas." And "play with," "play with" rang echoing through her consciousness. "I haven't any," she added childishly.

Susanna Moore's

The veins stood out on his forehead again. "Don't you like me, ivory Goddess?" he asked in his deep fine voice.

"Do you want me to like you in a Christmas way?" she asked.

He laughed his admiring laugh. "Rather that way than not at all, to begin with.— To begin with, don't you like me at all, ivory lady?" he persisted.

"To begin with—I don't know. Ignorance is quite well—to begin with."

"To begin with then, may I come to tea this afternoon?"

"You may come to tea, but I know nothing about who may be here doing the same. Luck may favour you, but of course I shan't."

Susanna threw him a delicious smile and held out her hand. He kissed it, tried to look deep into her eyes, and not succeeding, left with a polite and formal speech.

Susanna returned to her occupation of stroking her ermine and watching the snow. She was beginning to feel a little chilly since the animation her visitor had brought to her body was ebbing. He stimulated her pleasantly; she divined him as a man with much more cleverness than he seemed to use or need. His voice was fine, a delight to the ear, and he was beautifully disciplined—all but those veins and hands, fine hands too, much finer than the rest of him. His wife, on the other hand was an unmitigated bore; she bored her, Susanna, most horribly with her unmeaning chatter; she probably bored him even more. Why did he endure it, she wondered. But there were always good practical reasons for things, reasons of which she did not think. People in enlightening her always ended with "you're wealthy and independent, not every one is." So perhaps he wasn't wealthy and independent. . . . She laughed a little; she really didn't care whether his wife bored him or not and whether he was obliged to stick to her or not.— She had never received him alone before: this morning for the first time his visit had flavour. . . . Their talks here and downstairs and on walks had been snatchy, disconnected. She had hardly given him a thought except to welcome him as an agreeable irruption into the monotony of this life. He was coming to flirt with her this afternoon;—let him, if he knew how;—if he knew how to extract any playfulness from her who felt devoid of the capacity. . . . Flirting was better than thinking, thinking

Love Days

of nothing. Thinking of nothing was like a hen's sitting on a porcelain egg. It served one to retain the habit—perhaps.

She rang her bell for Jeanne and asked for a hot bag for her feet. But it was really lunch time already, Madame, Jeanne admonished. That was well, Susanna thought; so much time filled. The Baron had his points—: she had thought it an hour earlier.

The windows were closed, Susanna thawed herself out. Then luncheon, luncheon in her salon, served appetizingly by a clean waiter and Jeanne, and yet inadequate to stimulate her appetite. And after luncheon a nap of at least an hour, in bed. It was really hardly worth while getting out of this bed late in the morning, it was still so familiar in the early afternoon, Susanna reflected today as she lay down.

About three o'clock she was free to leave her bed again and was ordered out of doors when the weather permitted. And today it fortunately forbade, so she did not have to disobey orders.— She stretched out in bed, and considered what she should send Ewart for Christmas. This was one of her pleasantest subjects of thought, so she took her time, lazily. Claude had gone back to New York after she had deserted: after she had eloped with Mrs. Collins and arranged that a note should be pinned on his bureau. The note she had thought very successful, though whether he agreed with her she could not determine. For his note in reply was snatchy, unwilling, as were all his notes and letters,—strangely unlike his easy self,—strangely, because, after all, writing was his profession. . . . But her letters, too, may have sounded unwilling, she realized, because, as a matter of fact, away from his presence she found it difficult to realize his interest for her, the interest to which the ready give and take of their attention had borne witness. . . . Their last fortnight together had been fairly amusing. She had alternated between pretending to have completely got over her cynicism and pretending to have become monstrously sophisticated;—mainly to see how far she could fool him. She had not fooled him, but she had mystified him a little and to be mystified and initiated into the mystery was, apparently, his idea of friendship, for he had hung on her lips with renewed assiduity and his concern for her health and well-being had taken on an increased warmth. . . . How strange a man, and for so strange a one, how charming a man! A companion pleasant like a changing sky in some climate which knew nothing of electric storms.

Susanna Moore's

What should she then send him to New York? The latest books—the latest socks? He would be sure to send her something lovely and astonishing to her lonely retreat. He, like Pol, was generous to a fault. What a silly expression—but she would make it mean that generosity hid other faults. His material generosity, for instance, might hide spiritual avarice: the inclination to enrich himself mentally while withholding his own hoardings—Who knew? Not she. . . .

She would send him both articles, books and socks, for the two extremes of his body.—She wondered whether she would ever see him again,—or anybody. It didn't seem for the moment to make much difference. No, she did not wish to see any one again, or anything she had ever seen before. . . . She wished, as a matter of fact, for nothing, because nothing she could think of was anything she felt a wish for.

It was snowing still. Susanna wondered suddenly how Mrs. Collins was getting on. She hoped she wasn't worrying about the sweaters: it didn't really make the slightest difference whether she sent them or not. Probably her friends would prefer some bit of gossip about her to all the sweaters in Switzerland. All her friends. And why not? Psychology was more interesting than sweaters. Even cheap melodrama was more interesting than ready-made sweaters. Why did one shrink so from telling what was true—what one felt—even if it was about a failure? If any one cared to know. . . . Was there anything in the world superior to truth, to reality? No. Reality was the one thing left to respect; to pin one's faith to, as it were; to believe in. The one thing that made no claims; that did not fool you. And every one was busy hiding it from every one else.

Susanna felt that she had got far enough into thinking for a time; that all she thought wasn't worth a headache, and that it was just as well to get up before she grew too accustomed to her bed, since in the end she would have to get up. Something was going on this afternoon. Oh yes, it was the Baron who was coming to flirt with the crystal lady, whom he had turned into the ivory lady rather neatly, without any explanatory note. How she disliked these elaborate appellations of another age; how much more attractive would this crystal Baron be without these conventional literary trappings.

Perhaps he thought her just as old-fashioned and silly for being

Love Days

a white lady, perhaps he thought that any one who affected a thing like white clothes deserved these names;—she couldn't tell him that they served her only as black trappings serve mourners: as a distraction from actualities. But she could wear something else to stop him. Of course she could, and he would have to readjust himself and find some other far-fetched appellatory compliment. If she wore flame-color he would no doubt call her lady of the Flames, or Salamander Lady; if she wore green he would probably, being German, call her Undine, and if she— What difference did it make what he called her: the point was that she did not want him to call her anything; she even disliked Mrs. Moore, and Mme. Grodz had never seemed serious. The only name she felt connected with was her own, unabridged: Susanna Moore.

It still was snowing. Going on snowing like this was as ungraceful a thing for the skies to do as going on talking forever was for a stupid person. There was a time limit to the charm of a phenomenon as to the charm of a person.— Susanna laughed a little mirthlessly.— How could she stand any more of this! Yet what else could she do! She was very little stronger: not strong enough to plunge into anything new, supposing there was anything new to attract her, which there was not.— That cousin, the Doctor, might help her; he was a specialist, the Baron had said. If he resembled his chattering cousin his specialty would be vapidty. Still, this girl had two men to spend Christmas with her, a husband who was dying to flirt with some one else, and a cousin, who perhaps flirted with her. For what else indeed should he have come so far? He couldn't really converse with her—exchange views or debate on things that mattered—since she was empty-headed and frivolous; and he had not come for his health, since it was restored.

I shall go mad yet, she suddenly thought; I'm already at the stage of spending my time speculating about a lot of people I'd rather not even see. I find this easier than reading or writing or thinking or feeling. I'm shrinking, together with my world—I'm shrinking into imbecility.

She jumped out of bed to arrest further self-examination, and possible self-pitying tears. She let Jeanne dress her and chatter to her. And when Jeanne was taking her white teagown from the drawer she stopped her. "Get my gold teagown from the trunk, some people are coming to tea."

Susanna Moore's

She stood at the white window and smiled ironically while the maid was at the trunk. She was going to wear the gown she had worn when Pol first kissed her. She had worn it, a happy Susanna, in what he had so prettily called a green silk cave, to receive her beautiful lover who had lasted a few months—though Claude's statistics showed that even the most perishable husbands averaged a few years. . . . And now she was going to wear it in that horrible hotel salon she hadn't even troubled to embellish, to receive a big, unbeautiful stranger who wanted to flirt with her to pass the time. . . . Why not? At bottom it was all the same thing: their fashion of playing against her fashion of playing. Whoever won got the other to play to his tune. She had lost last time and had quit the game. She had quit after a few months; she would probably quit here after half an hour. She would probably quit after he said crystal lady or its substitute for the third time. If he hadn't a mysterious German substratum that vibrated under his English manner and a fine voice like a bell and a viola mixed, she wouldn't go into the game at all. Or if she had anything else to do or to think of, or if her legs and back were not so tired.

"Don't forget my coral slippers and pearl stockings," she called to Jeanne, "and get out my chinchilla scarf in case I'm cold, please."

It amused her a little to look at herself when she was dressed and to note the differences in her present self. . . . For one thing, the gown had grown too wide; she had to pin it in under the arm all the way down with a series of pearl pins to make it fit, as it was meant to, like a skin. She had had bobbed hair last time, and looked nineteen; she now did it in the fashion of French actresses, with an exaggerated simplicity, and wore great pearls in her ears, and looked her age, twenty-six. She wondered in fact whether she did not look older. . . . Of the changes in her expression she could not judge, although they were the most radical of her changes, she felt. Physically she looked more delicate; her skin was whiter, her veins bluer, her eyes and their banks were darker—yes, the surrounding portions of her eyes looked like the mossy banks of a pool—; and her lips were reddened like a French woman's. Her hair was the same burnished copper, brighter now that it was flat.— She knew all this, and after a moment's inspection she lost interest in all this, and turned from the mirror.

Love Days

It was four o'clock when she went into the salon and had the fire lighted in the hearth, and settled herself in the lounging chair beside it and a little to one side so that she might receive its warmth on the whole length of her stretched-out body. The tea-table was shoved to the other side of the hearth within the radius of its cheer, and an easy-chair was placed near hers. The curtains shut out the everlasting whiteness, and a lamp or two were switched on. She lay in the fire-light, a golden streak herself, with other golden streaks and splashes playing over her.

She closed her eyes and enjoyed the warmth; her mind was empty.

After a time the Baron was announced and came. She saw that he had changed to darker clothes; he looked more formal, more correct, still more groomed and disciplined. She held out her hand from her reclining position with a perfunctory smile of welcome. He bent over it and kissed it lingeringly, and the veins she found amusing to watch stood out on his forehead as he looked at her from his height, let his gaze travel over her, brought it back, and rested it on her face.

"You are today the most beautiful woman I have ever known, or seen, and you look like the Danaë about to be visited by Zeus." He said it as though to himself; his eyelids flickered, and there was a suppressed convulsion in his face.

"Oh," Susanna was astonished and therefore doubly charmed, "how pretty, how very pretty,—because this does seem like a brazen tower and because I do feel a little like the earth suffering from draught. Sit down, do," and she waved him graciously to the chair, and looked at him for a moment with warm interest, and with eyes that were the starry unguarded eyes of before.

He seated himself, crossed his legs, and scrutinized her keenly and yet hotly, as it were. "Then, besides being disconcertingly lovely and perspicacious you are versed in classical legend?" he said.

"You ask that like an inquisitor; as though you were going to get me to make an incriminating admission, for which you would martyr and condemn me for the glory of your sex."

His veins again swelled on his white brow. Susanna laughed; did they, perhaps, swell whenever he talked?

"I've never before met with a woman as beautiful as you are,

Susanna Moore's

who besides is intelligent and educated." He still spoke as though to himself.

"Have you just discovered that, then, after all our talks?"

"I knew you were clever; I've had no occasion to know you were highly educated." His tone was funnily pedantic, full of astonishment and deep admiration.

Susanna laughed,—she recognized the tone. "I had no occasion to know you were intelligent, but I divined it. I now divine that you're 'highly educated', on the sly, so to say; and now that I've divined that too, I hope that you will no longer withhold these qualities from me, confining yourself to admiration, as before!" She laughed provocatively, and looked at him provocatively: it was fun to shoot through the armour of his vanity.

"You do me an injustice; you are cruel to laugh at my clumsiness," he replied calmly. "I am slow to adjust myself at best; and I am even slower now because I am under the influence of a great emotion."

Susanna's eyebrows shot up; she looked at him attentively; his hands were quiet, and the veins of his forehead were quiet. "Yes?" she inquired politely, as he paused.

"I have a great love of beauty. Beauty is for me that phenomenon for the sake of which everything else exists. It enraptures my soul and my senses. I came here today under the enchantment of your beauty, to feast my soul and my eyes on your beauty, which is to me so transcendent, that it is almost impossible to bear." The veins stood out on his brow for a moment, as Susanna noted. "But," he pursued, after a pause in which he again became quite calm. "I love intelligence and knowledge too. I love them profoundly. I respect and admire them; I cannot remain faithful to beauty which is not, let us say, ballasted with them. Yet—in a woman,—in the object to which a man's aspirations converge symbolically and in the flesh, I have never before met with them. That you should unite in your frail form everything on earth that has value for me, is a revelation which still overwhelms me."

Susanna smiled; she found all this rather interesting. The skill with which he rose to the occasion, suddenly becoming theoretical; the way in which his racial preferences shone through his foreign polish; the fact that he wasn't at all overwhelmed, that his emotion was held in abeyance to his will which chose that his

Love Days

intellect should work . . . She liked the last phenomenon the best,—this was rather better than anything she had expected; this was rather interesting . . .

"Speak to me," he entreated in his deep voice, "so that I may know that you are real."

"Very well, I'll forgive you," Susanna laughed.

"For what?" he asked.

"For not having recognized my intelligence and my high education at once. And I'll give you as many exhibitions of them as my frail form will permit. You see I have a good memory, too."

"You have one quality I don't admire," he replied, flushing. "You swing the lash of sarcasm too often."

"You will admire it," Susanna said softly, turning her eyes on his, and then dropping them, "when you know it is a weapon of defence."

"Not when you use it against me," he retorted quickly. "You need no defence against me; I am your slave, neither willing nor unwilling, but unreasoning, unconscious, like one who, lost in the dark, suddenly sees a great shaft of light and follows it to its mysterious source, with a hope too great for words."

They measured each other with watchful eyes.

"What do you do with yourself in England?" Susanna asked.

"Why do you suddenly ask?" he said after a pause.

"I'm suddenly interested," she said with her eyes on her hands, "and I want to know why you are lost in the dark. I want to know whether you're really lost in the dark . . ." she opened her eyes slowly, full on his, "and if you ask me why I want to know that, you'll be premature."

She thought that he might laugh the admiring hearty laugh he had for her cleverness, but he did not: apparently it no longer astonished him into amusement; he had apparently accepted it as a fact.

"I'll tell you anything you want to know, no matter why, out of mere gratitude for your wanting to know," he replied calmly. "I raise cattle and breed horses in England, and read, and live in the country with my wife; and her relatives and friends visit us, and we visit them in return; and we go to London for a fortnight or two in the season, and then we go to functions or to the play together, and I go to concerts alone. These last are the best hours.—And sometimes we travel, and I meet people, neither relatives nor

Susanna Moore's

friends, who amuse me, or please me, or have something to say to me.— And once in my life I met a woman who is as a shaft of heavenly light whose effulgence beats into me and enchants and maddens me.” His gaze had plunged into the flames playing over Susanna's body; his voice vibrated with emotion; he clutched the arms of his chair and leaned toward her, breathing deeply as though breathing her into his breast.

“And instead of all this you ought to be sitting in the Herrenhaus or whatever the governing body is called where Nietzsche's Herren meet to govern the slaves, after” she threw it at him pointedly “after they have learned to govern themselves—as you have.”

The veins swelled on his temples; his keen eyes grew blunt with admiration.

“Have a care,” he murmured, leaning further toward her, “don't be too miraculous and too clever. It's dangerous for a man like me to find his match.”

Susanna raised herself on her arm. “Dangerous! Dangerous for whom?” she challenged.

He did not reply. He drank her in, her new aspect,—since she now sat up and placed her pearl legs and coral feet on a cushion on the floor and he had her beauty at a new angle—; drank her in, and held on to himself.

“Because if you mean to warn me,” Susanna resumed, the fire of perilous play in her eyes, “you needn't worry. If I were only your match I might be in danger, since you're a clever, subtle, disciplined handsome blond beast, who ought to be whipping men into order instead of cattle. But I think, you know,” she drawled, “that I'm more than your match, and so the danger is yours.”

“Yes,” he murmured in his deep and fine voice, “the danger is mine; not because you are more self-possessed and subtle than I, but because you are cold and I am hot; hot with enthusiasm for you, hot with passion for your beauty, and sore with the desire to heat your cold blood.” He devoured her with his eyes. He was about to kneel before her, she feared. And she feared to find him ridiculous, for at this moment she found him rather remarkable and exciting.

“Come here and sit beside me and receive the coolness that emanates from me; I make you a gift of it.”

Love Days

He received this remark as one receives a well aimed blow, stoically; and seated himself beside her, very close to her, devouring her with his eyes; pale, with his hands tightly clasped and his knuckles showing white.

Susanna looked at him triumphantly. She was putting him through his paces, if one might so call the methods by which man controls his immediate impulses for the sake of more remote goods; she was proving to him that she was his master, his tamer—; she was playing, and enjoying the game;—he was worth playing with—

“But,” he continued as though nothing had intervened, pulling himself together under the lash of her triumphant self-confidence, “because you are dangerous to me, as I have never imagined any woman could be, I may become dangerous to you. Fire spreads more quickly than icy blasts, and even if it does not, it at least tries to, and in the attempt alone there is danger. My danger may become your danger.”

He stared at her a little threateningly, a little hopelessly, a little defeated already. But Susanna did not see him, she only heard his words, disappointed. This clever man suddenly sounded biblical and pompous, a little absurd, like a false prophet. Her interest waned—: there was no danger.

“I wish it would,” she threw in flippantly, childishly, indifferently, while she stared into the fire with her elbows on her knees.

In an instant he had picked her up into his arms, and was raining kisses on her eyes and her hair and throat; hot, mad kisses. She let him do it for a stupefied moment; at her first registered objection he desisted.

“If you kiss me once more,” she said, still in his arms, “I shall raise my voice and call Mrs. Collins from the next room, and after that I shan’t ever receive you again, nor talk to you again.”

She felt his heart beating, she felt the reverberation of his kisses through his body; she felt it a little through her own.

“You shouldn’t have, without my consent,” she rebuked him gently. She was herself surprised at the leniency she felt, but his kisses did now strike her as a kind of satisfactory compensation to him, and a kind of ease to her conscience for tormenting him for her amusement. And now that she had paid for the pleasure, and cheaply—since his kisses were neither agreeable nor

Susanna Moore's

disagreeable, but only hasty untasted physical impacts—, she went on with the game.

"Now that I have you where I want you," she continued to this strong and clever stranger in whose arms she was, "I—"

"Where you want me? You want me here?" he broke his silence.

"Why not?" she drawled sweetly, smiling innocently into his serious face, "you're very easy to want here—"

He made a gesture to tighten his embrace.

"Don't stir," she ordered quickly. "If you as much as stir I shall call. You quite understand, because you're clever and you're self-willed, as I am. I want you here as you are, to punish you, as you deserve." She turned her eyes provocatively to his: "It shall be your punishment to embrace her who punishes you until she release you. Do you accept?"

"I accept," he said. "I accept anything from you. I accept the gift of your closeness; I accept the gift of your cruelty. I can bear anything but rejection. It is why I am not kissing you to death."

Susanna looked at him; she had never looked at him attentively before,—and certainly not at such close range—

He was staring straight ahead into space, as he had stared since she had first spoken of punishment. His face was pale, rigid and stern. Thus might a Saxon soldier look a dangerous foe in the face proudly, Susanna thought admiringly.— And as she noted the determination in his brow and his jaw, the tight line of his mouth, the frozen passion of his eyes, and felt the grasping yet loose pressure of his hands on her body, a slow wave of enthusiasm surged up in her. Enthusiasm for his skill, his strength, his subtle imagination. Yes, he was like a monument he had built of himself, and he was a strong and skilful builder. He was a partner worthy of the game. . . . There could then be, in this game of love, at least some intelligence, some skill, some subtlety, some danger. It might, then, be a game like war, and not like tennis . . . given a partner like this one.

"Your first name is John," she singsonged.

"Yes," he said, continuing to stare ahead, "Johannes."

"Baron Johannes, listen to me."

"I listen, Susanna."

She felt his deep voice vibrating through his body; she now felt,

Love Days

in the established calm of this situation, the volume of his strength, his physical and spiritual strength, subject to her, and a sense of power inundated and intoxicated her.— It was the first positive feeling she had had in the negative waste of her recent days and hours. . . . This returning life was indeed worth giving something for; perhaps worth giving anything for.— She gathered up her own strength joyously.

“When you say you are lost and in the dark, I believe you.”

“You may,” he said.

“If you were to say that your spirit was smothered and your strength wasted, I should believe you.”

“You might,” he said.

“If you were to say that it would liberate your spirit and your strength if I loved you, I should believe you.”

He pulled himself together to remain quiet but he turned his head slowly to her and his keen eyes were the eyes of a dog as he murmured “Susanna.”

“But why should I, even if I could, help a man who doesn’t help himself? Why have you not cast off these shackles yourself—why do you, a proud man, beg of a woman,—tell me that?”

Before he could reply there was a knock at the door. He made an automatic movement to jump up, but recollected himself. “Do you release me?” he asked, retaining her in his arms.

“I must!” She laughed and fell back as he rose quickly and went to the door.

“Frau von Berg would like to know whether Mrs. Moore is receiving” he reported rigidly.

“Tell the boy to say I’ll be charmed,” Susanna replied, ringing for Jeanne. “I think she must have seen you come in, and have come to pay you a visit; she’s never been here before.”

He said nothing: he stood erect and looked down at her “strongly,” she thought; that’s what he is going to do; to look at me strongly, to try to crush me with his resisting strength.

As she was giving Jeanne the tea orders, Frau von Berg entered, her Pekinese in her arms.

“Dear Mrs. Moore, so very amiable of you to receive on this damp day when one knows not what to do,” she cried in her broken English, animatedly. “Lieber Baron, Sie hier! Wie nett dass man sich hier trifft!” She handed him her dog.

Susanna Moore's

They seated themselves around the tea-table. Jeanne was throwing logs on the fire; the dog was barking; Frau von Berg was chattering in her charming Viennese and her broken English alternately, as she turned from one to the other. Susanna thought it all very noisy, and turned gratefully every now and then for refreshment to the rigid pose and immobile stare with which John was registering his consciousness of her while his hands played with the nervous dog.

"Grausamer Mensch!" the lady was saying; "Sie machen mein Hündchen unglücklich," and took the dog from him.

"Frau von Berg says I'm cruel enough to make a dog miserable," he translated for Susanna.

"Ich glaube Sie haben ganz recht. Die Frage ist, kann er auch gegen sich selbst grausam sein. . . . Ist er schön-grausam, oder nur—so grausam, ordinär grausam—" Susanna laughed.

"You speak German like this, so perfectly!" Frau von Berg exploded with amazement, "But, gnädige Frau, it is quite unheard of how you speak our language—for a foreigner!—But where then did you acquire it?" Frau von Berg continued to explode with amazement. "French every one speaks as a matter of course, but German—"

Susanna had looked at John to read his answer to her question on his face; instead she saw an expression of complete enchantment come over it. His eyes grew bright with a kind of beatific pleasure, she saw; he looked at her for a moment as though she were a holy thing. Susanna turned startled eyes away, to Frau von Berg. "It's a secret," she said.

After that the conversation was carried on in German. The Baron thawed from his pose of latent frozen power to his usual alertness and animation. Only his keen eyes constantly sought Susanna's with a kind of fixedness below the surface which seemed to say: I'm not letting you go for an instant.— But in what bonds he was trying to hold her, his eyes did not reveal.

Susanna, who had spoken little German since her university days found the attempt most diverting. She used the longest and most academic phraseology she could command; and, as a matter of fact, it was the only linguistic sphere she commanded at all: colloquial German had never been within her accomplishment. The results were at times amusing, at times impressive,—so it seemed, judging by their reception. Frau von Berg returned

Love Days

every now and then to a repetition of her first incredulous surprise; and John, though he said nothing after the blaze-up of enraptured appreciation in his eyes, listened to every word she uttered in his native tongue with absorbed attention.

Frau von Berg rattled on merrily in her piquant Viennese; Susanna tried to imitate her accent in her heavy literary vocabulary; they both laughed a good deal. The Baron spoke in the purest of North-German, without a trace of the influence of the language into which he had been born, so to say, and with which he had grown up. His voice sounded less ripe and beautiful than it did in English:—it was less unusual to have that kind of voice in German than in English,—one was more used to it, Susanna supposed. He now seemed, indeed, so entirely German, so entirely foreign, that Susanna almost wondered whether what had happened between them was real; for it suddenly seemed overwhelmingly odd and unreal. It seemed as though the only link between them had snapped with the passing of the common language in which they had played with one another. It seemed as though she had lost him—her playfellow—in this completely strange Prussian.

She laughed at herself.— How easily she was excited by sensible manifestations, as it were; excited purposelessly. She had known that he was Johannes as well as John; it had, indeed, given him his cachet for her. They were playing a game, and his being Johannes and her having his language to captivate him with was only another weapon for her. . . . His being so completely Johannes was, in fact no point for him.— Why then— But that was it: he was now so completely Johannes, that she did not see the John shining through, as she had seen, when he was John, the Johannes; and it was the combination that fascinated her. And as Johannes he was slipping from her interest, as he would, were he only John.

Susanna's mind, which traversed all these considerations in a flash, came out of their jumble with clarity, nevertheless, and with apprehension.

"Baron John," she said in English, "won't you be good enough to throw another log in the fire, since Jeanne is getting tea."

"Rather," he answered in English. "It is fairly chilly in here. How about having your fur over you; let me put it over you until the fire recovers." He threw her chinchilla over her feet,

Susanna Moore's

tucked her in, and then fixed the fire, speaking in English all the time. Susanna wondered whether he divined her wish.

"I think we ought to give Frau von Berg an English lesson now that her ambition may be fired by your example; and Frédigonde—is Frédigonde bi-lingual?" he asked, taking the dog from its mistress's lap again.

"She,—ach she is tri-lingual; no four-lingual; one for each leg," Frau von Berg laughed. "She has French, German, English, and—"

"Her private bark, like all of us," Susanna put in.

Jeanne brought in the tea and arranged it on the table.

"You'll be a dear, and pour, won't you, Baron John, if Frau von Berg will excuse me. I feel so tired today."

Frau von Berg excused; Baron John graciously was a dear in the tea-pouring line, which in Susanna's eyes mitigated his excessive and cooling foreignness; Susanna played with Frédigonde, and the chatter was all about clothes;—Susanna's clothes, Frau von Berg's clothes, Parisian clothes, Viennese clothes. All this was restful babble between the fusillade of John's glances. Until Susanna was rested, rested and ready; and then it became boring babble.

She wondered whether Frau von Berg, now that she had had tea, had basked in the presence of the handsome Rettigheim, had discovered that she, Susanna, spoke literary German and had her clothes made by Callot and Chéruit, would not consider leaving, if the idea were properly implanted in her mind. She looked at John appealingly; the veins in his forehead swelled as he looked back.

"I wonder what makes Daisy so dreadfully late," he said, as he looked at his watch; "quarter of six already, by Jove!"

"Where is she then?" Frau von Berg inquired.

"She went to Geneva this morning to receive her cousin, who's arriving from England that way. The train was due at one or two o'clock. It's a beastly day for travelling."

"I should say so," remarked Frau von Berg, "for a woman all alone."

"Oh, but she wished to be alone. Dr. Whittleby is her great friend and chum. A kind of brother," he added. "He always spends his Christmas vacation with her, with us;—it's an institution. I can't fancy what's keeping them."

Love Days

"You may be worrying unnecessarily; they may have come back long ago."

"No, for I left word that I should be here in Mrs. Moore's parlour, and wished to be called when they arrived," he said pointedly. Susanna wondered whether it was true; so did Frau von Berg, who also wondered why he took no further steps—not even to the office—if he was worried.

"It's surely the weather that has delayed them. Mrs. Collins doesn't seem to have got back from her shopping expedition either," Susanna contributed.

The Baron asked casually: "Then Mrs. Collins spent this beastly day in Geneva too?" But there was a note in his voice that drew Susanna's eyes to him. She saw his face frozen into its mask of disciplined subjugation again, and his eyes penetrating hers, and instantly she recalled the scene and the allusion that were in his mind.

"Yes, poor thing,—to do her Christmas shopping." She smiled ironically into his eyes.

Frau von Berg at last had the grace to depart. She, her gay prattle, her silvery voice and laugh, her golden curls, her barking Frédigonde, all departed together, and left the room deliciously silent.

Susanna, who had risen to be admired afresh in the final explosion of departure, lay down again. Baron John fixed the fire silently, absorbed in thought, and then seated himself beside Susanna's chair, feasting his keen eyes on her beauty; silent; offering himself quite obviously for a new assault on his will power.

Susanna laughed appreciatively into his eyes, expecting him to return the compliment:—after all, even contestants occasionally shook hands. . . . But he remained in the game, rigid, the rigid foe; and she stiffened to the challenge.

She laughed again. "Mrs. Collins really isn't home yet, or she would report. But how about the Baroness, will she report?"

"No, probably not," he said slowly; "it's her great day; her day with the man who means most to her in the world. Why disturb her?"

"Really," Susanna said reflectively, "her cousin, her chum, *and* the man who means most to her in the world—how nice!"

Susanna Moore's

"How nice?" He eyed her sharply. "How nice for whom?" he asked sharply.

"For her, I suppose. A cousin, a chum, and a lover, all in one . . . isn't that what you mean?"

His hands showed white at the knuckles; a glint of triumph shot up for an instant in his eyes;—Susanna saw the veins swell on his brow. Quite apparently he was moved;—perhaps he was weak after all, this—this Nietzschean blond beast;—perhaps he was after all under the subjection of herd morality. A certain indignation took possession of Susanna;—had he dared to fool her?— She would soon find out.

"Isn't that what you meant—that he is her lover?"

"He loves her; he has loved her since they were children."

"And she him?" Susanna went on impatiently.

"And she loves him," he said slowly.

"He loves her, and she him, and she married you,—why?"

"For my title, I expect," he answered quickly, and with a certain relief.

"I ask you all this, not because I care in the least about anything the Baroness did or does; it doesn't concern me nor interest me; but because I need to understand you. You quite understand, don't you?"

"Yes," he replied in his vibrant voice, "and I tell you, because I need to have you understand me."

"Why did she marry you and not the man she loved?" Susanna pursued more gently.

"Because he was desperately ill with consumption; too ill to marry."

"Oh," Susanna breathed, "how queer—"

"How queer?"

"How queer to marry some one else then." For a moment her eyes grew starry and blind, and she felt a vague sweet pain in her heart; but the image of the Baroness Agatha arose—and it passed. "And why did you marry her?" she resumed her investigation.

"Because the moon shone one evening some years ago," he replied calmly. "May I smoke again?"

"You may. And don't you mind their loving one another?" she asked rather breathlessly.

"Why should I mind, since I do not love her? Who am I that

Love Days

I should trample on her happiness, if she can achieve it? Let them love. . . . Let them be lovers."

"Jenseits von Gut und Böse—Johannes!" Susanna threw at him.

He slid off his chair, threw his cigarette in the fire, and was on his knees before her, kissing her hand.

"Susanna," he whispered. He pronounced it "Susahnah," German style, and Susanna thought it sounded very queer. "Wunderbares Weib," he whispered next, and Susanna thought this sat even more strangely on her, particularly the "Weib." He held her hand to his breast, and his enraptured eyes looked into hers.

Whatever he saw there restored him to himself effectively, for he released her hand deliberately, lingeringly, as though the act of release were a positive and not a negative one; he released her from the encompassing worship of his gaze, resumed his mask that asked for punishment, and rose.

"Sit here again beside me," Susanna ordered, making room for him, "and tell me whether you are a Nietzsche disciple in theory too."

"You've guessed quite correctly," he replied, with keen, admiring eyes again, "and tell me, wonderful Susanna, how the devil you come to know German and Nietzsche?" He laboured to be light, and Susanna heard the labour, and admired his subtle instinct, and his hold on himself, and his skill.

"I never knew more than a little about Nietzsche, and I've forgotten most of that," she evaded his question. "But I'll think him up this evening, while you're dancing downstairs, and I'll have him ready for you in the morning, if it's a fine day, and we go for a walk. Herren Moral—Sklaven Moral—Uebermensch—Umwertlung—" she went on enumerating with a babyish accent, enchanting and puzzling him. "Anti-Christ—Menschliches, Allzumenschliches—or is it Fröhliches, Allzufröhliches?" Susanna giggled a little; she felt for the moment a schoolgirl back in Berlin again.

"No, it could never be that," he replied in genuine perplexity and with some bitterness. "You recite these titles like an adorable schoolgirl, but a schoolgirl. Do they then mean nothing to you after all?"

Susanna sat up suddenly, and turning about faced him fully. Her lily like pallor and her glistening hair, her perfume, her

Susanna Moore's

pearls, her lemon golden body dove up, as it were, suddenly upon him; she granted him no truce. "I may recite them like a school-girl," she said breathing quickly, "but I'm willing to go to your school and apply them like a woman, if you can make me feel their charm. I've met with the good and evil of the morality we profess, and I see no difference between them. I see no difference in anything I've met with, it's been a flat and monotonous repetition. . . . I'm willing—I'm anxious to taste the quality of what lies beyond, if there is anything and it has a quality—If you can provide it—" Her eyes shone a little wildly now—"If you can make me believe that you can provide a quality, a flavour, something that matters and grips—I don't care whether it's good or evil, whether it kills or gives life.—Do you understand—if you can raise me out of this deadly, this dreadful, this unsufferable triviality and clear-headedness and insensitiveness, I don't care how you do it. . . ." She swayed toward him, she almost fell on him, as she offered him her rigid bitter lips, challengingly and yet unwillingly.

He caught her, crushed her to him, and kissed her mouth vehemently, bruisingly, brutally, with the ardour of a madman. And Susanna came to.

She extricated herself from his embrace, and covered her mouth with one hand, and his with her other hand.

"I can't stand any more," she breathed, "please go now."

Their eyes shone with a sort of madness into one another's.

"You ask me to go now, when I want to stay forever; when I can endure anything but a severance." His voice rang like music.

"I'll go mad if you don't go;—mad;" she repeated, rising, "and that will be the end of everything and of all,—and so much the better."

"Susannah," his voice sang, "I love you."

"I'll go mad if you don't go now," she repeated, "and if you don't, I shall go—" She started to cross the room, ignoring his outstretched arms and the prayer in his eyes—

There was a loud rap at the door.

"Entrez," she cried loudly, arresting her flight in the centre of the room; to call "entrez" seemed to her a reprieve.

The Baroness burst into the room followed by Mrs. Collins and the cousin.

Love Days

Susanna glanced at her bedroom door where her desire directed her, and then at the trio; and she turned slowly to them, conscious that if she now walked out of the room she would be making a scene, a complicated scene. She held her hand out coolly to the Baroness whose informal entrance she considered an intrusion.

"Pardon us for coming in so informally," Agatha chirruped, "Frau von Berg told us that you were expecting us."

"So we were," Susanna replied coolly; "at least I heard the Baron say that he had left word for you to look him up here."

She was apathetically shaking hands with the cousin, whom the Baroness in her strident cold gaiety was introducing with: "You see, I've brought him all right."

"In American you would say 'I've produced him,'" Susanna remarked with a short laugh. "You'll all have tea?" she rang for hot water. "Sit down, Mrs. Collins, you must be dead tired, and cold. I'll pour tea. No, thank you, Baron—"

Her head ached; and she could have screamed with irritation as Agatha's shrill voice rattled away at the two men who were trying in vain to talk to one another, and Mrs. Collins slow speech poured its shopping news into her ears.

After a time they were all seated; the hot water had come; Susanna in an armchair near the fire made tea, wondering whether this afternoon was going on forever. No wonder that she couldn't get well, she thought, with all this activity and noise, empty activity and noise, about her; no wonder her chest hurt and her legs hurt and her head burned and her cheeks. . . . Everybody seemed to be talking at once.

She dipped the tea-ball into the pot, and lay back and glanced about her a little wildly. Her eyes met those of the cousin and she quickly withdrew them. He at least spoke low and kept still enough, and his eyes were strange. She had not really seen him before in the blindness of her annoyance and the coercion of her self-control, nor did she look at him again after that brief contact:—what did she care about these people anyway, except that they should have their tea and depart.

They seemed to get no further than the weather in their conversation, the weather of every hour, from all angles; the height of the snow, how the streets were cleaned, how wet each one got; the shops—they had met shopping:—"Oh, yes; and Mrs. Collins

Susanna Moore's

was no end of a dear, a duck, a help; and so was Hughie; he came right along shopping—Oh, yes, the train was delayed, got in at two, and Hughie came right on shopping without any lunch, since there was none given on the train which was due at one.”

“How!” from John, “did you take Hugh shopping without giving him a chance to lunch?”

Oh, she wanted him to take a bite, but he knew that she had heaps to do, “and he’s no end of a sport, and wants his way.”

Susanna, having poured the three cups of tea inimically but thoroughly, leaned back in her chair, poking a cushion behind her assisted by the Baron whom she ignored, relaxed, and took another look at the dragged about and glad to be dragged about Hughie, cousin, friend and lover to this nervous, artificial and vapid sportswoman.

Hughie sat bent down, with his cup held between his knees, staring into the fire, absently. She could see that he was young, but lined and hollow-cheeked, with the finely modelled cheek and the strong jaw typical of his race, deep set eyes, and a mouth like a large and fine bow, and thick black hair:—a head constructed on typical English lines, meant to be handsome, but with beauty somehow not achieved,—wasted and worn. She could not see his expression, but she saw enough to wonder at this being Hughie. At the very least he looked like Hugh.

Susanna looked with some astonishment at the woman to whom he was Hughie. Agatha was gowned as mannishly as was possible without crossing the line to eccentricity. She was therefore correctly, expensively but moderately mannish. Susanna knew quite well the style she affected and the style she was, but she had never before given her appearance any critical attention. She now decided that Agatha’s fresh young blondness with faded blue but well-shaped eyes, a nondescript open mouth, large good teeth, a long thin nose that spoiled the rhythm of her face, and a long slim lanky body, were all of a homeliness classified traditionally as aristocratic. And that she therefore clothed her homeliness in a style classed as aristocratic.— Well, Susanna concluded, better partake of the ugliness of a whole class than of one’s own special kind; it was less shocking. But the Baroness Agatha became just so much less consequential to her.

And this class person, this woman who had been aborted before she became an individual, had for lover this serious youth,

Love Days

whose head, bent like a Greek's, looked bent beneath the load of some universe; and for husband this strong man, who was either of the species nearest to the superman, or a clever fraud: in both cases far too good for her. What was it John had said about him, and her marriage? . . . She couldn't remember and she couldn't think, for Agatha was cleaving the air with her voice.

"What a ripping gown, I say, Mrs. Moore; quite too wonderful."

"Yes, quite too wonderful," her husband agreed; "and then again, not too wonderful."

"Paris, of course—New York? I say, do they turn them out as swank as that in New York?"

"It *is* perfectly stunning, Mrs. Moore," Mrs. Collins vouchsafed; "I've been just fascinated ever since I'm here. I've been thinking," she added naively, "that the rest of us must look like dismal crows."

"Oh, I say, Mrs. Collins," Agatha laughed stridently, "isn't that a bit thick; wouldn't larks or something like that do? What do you think, Hughie?" She turned her voice on him with a tone of proprietorship, Susanna thought.

Hughie raised his head. "I've been under its spell, since we've come,—like Mrs. Collins. It has brought back my boyhood to me; Christmas; Chatterbox, and pictures of golden fairies; or perhaps the golden fairies a boy invents when the golden tree makes a poet of him. . . . I hope Mrs. Moore won't mind having evoked happy memories; I'm afraid she may mind being thought of as a fairy." He smiled at Susanna; a tremulous sweet smile of the lips, very like his tremulous sweet low voice, while his deep set blue eyes under his lined brow and above his sunken cheeks remained grave.

Something went queer in Susanna, physically queer, as though she were in the presence of a weeping man, or a dying child, or some similarly horribly touching performance. And then she went furious with herself, with him, this lover of a fraud, who spoke like a Sunday-school boy,—with them all.

"I don't mind being a child's fairy, I mind being a man's, yes," she said icily.

"I thought you might; I'm so sorry, but I thank you in the name of the child, and I shall take care not to tell you again when

Susanna Moore's

you make me happy." He smiled again, quite as sweetly; quite without resentment, or even self-consciousness.

Oh, thought Susanna, tightened up to suffocation with annoyance, I could say something quite as pretty to you, Cousin, Friend, Lover; I could say that you evoke in my imagination a hidden carpet of violets beside a singing brook, where one might lay one's hot face and grow cool and sweet; but I don't say things like this to hypocrites.— She glowered at and through him hostilely, and then turned her frowning eyes upon Baron John, who was speaking, while his eyes again devoured her.

"—and I told Mrs. Moore that you might be able to help her."

"Yes, Mrs. Moore," Agatha interposed shrilly, "Hugh is a perfect wonder, so helpful; I do want you to profit by his skill. I want you to do your best for Mrs. Moore, Hughie—to set her up and make her fit."

Susanna had withdrawn her eyes from John's and looked down in her lap. She feared to raise them again, she felt them to be full of fury against both of these people. His possessive disposal of her. . . . Her possessive disposal of Hughie . . . the way she handed him out to her patronizingly. . . . This tone, not even submerged as undertone, but floating shamelessly on the surface, struck Susanna like a violent, indecent clang. Though it was the clang of truth, the clang of truth. . . . And it raced through her mind that *he*, having been given the right to an interest in her, was only being indelicate, but that she, Agatha, was exposing herself impertinently, indecently. She felt infinite disgust for her, and something approaching hatred.

"I shall be very happy to do what I can," Hugh was saying; "of course I should like it if Mrs. Moore would suggest to Dr. Guyau to call me in consultation. Or, at least, Dr. Guyau would be better pleased, I think."

"I had in mind a little friendly advice rather than anything else," the Baron put in quickly. "Mrs. Moore doesn't get her strength back as quickly as she would like; as we all should like."

"That's just it, that's all that is the matter," came soothingly from Mrs. Collins, who, recalled to her rôle as nurse, rose and punched Susanna's cushion.

"Don't you think we had better ask Mrs. Moore what is wanted," Hugh said, looking in vain at Susanna's rigid down-

Love Days

cast face; "I fancy that what is wanted is that we should all be off."

"Rather; it's past seven!" the Baron said, consulting his wrist watch and addressing himself to Agatha. "It's time to dress for dinner, my dear, and late at that; if you don't look sharp, you'll miss the first waltz."

"Fancy—seven o'clock—your fault, Hughie. I should say I shall have to hurry!" She made strident farewells to Susanna; at the door she paused. "Dinner at half past seven, Hughie!"

"I'm afraid I shan't be able to dine." He pulled himself upright. "My dinner things weren't put in my suitcase, and the trunk isn't due until tomorrow; I'm so sorry."

"Oh, I say!" Her voice was soft with disappointment.

"I'm so sorry, Daisy." He walked to the door, where she stood arrested. "It's too bad—I'll make up for it tomorrow." He took her hand and smiled at her apologetically. "It's too bad, dear."

"It is; and we're having the Harringtons and the Smythes dining with us;—but if you'll come as you are—" she added in doubt.

"I couldn't; I shouldn't feel decent," he said flushing a little, Susanna, who was watching this episode with strange interest, thought.

"But I'll see you at dinner? You'll dine in the restaurant?" she asked.

"I rather thought of taking a bite in my room and going to bed to be fit for tomorrow."

"Oh, very well; but if you change your mind, come down to the lounge, and I'll run out between dances, if I can, and see you. Be sure to do that, Hughie, there's a good old thing. You promise? Very well, then. Good-bye all!"

She was gone.

Susanna felt as though something horrible had left the room. Breathing a sigh of relief she turned to the Baron, who, while talking to Mrs. Collins, was advancing to take leave, his eyes on her.

Susanna held out her hand to him silently. He kissed it, looking deep into her eyes, eyes now indifferent, lighted by no effulgence of memory, as were his own. As he looked, the veins of his forehead swelled, and his eyes became hard and his jaw stiff-

Susanna Moore's

ened. "Until tomorrow, Susanna?" he asked in his vibrant tones, unmindful or neglectful of the others.

"Until tomorrow, Baron Johannes," Susanna responded with hard eyes and rigid mouth. It did her good to say it; the Susanna and Johannes clove through this intricate, messy atmosphere, with which she so absurdly found herself encompassed, cleanly and clearly, with a sharp and frank reality.

Mrs. Collins looked on, stupidly astonished; Dr. Hugh's eyes were as inscrutable as before. He approached Susanna to say good-bye.

"I'm afraid we have all been guilty of shoving advice at you, Mrs. Moore; but if you would let me, I think I might suggest a thing or two to you. I have been through a good deal myself," he grew a little diffident; "I could be of some use to you, I think, and I should so much like to." He smiled his dreadful touching smile, and held her hand like a sick child's.

The Baron had left after their dramatic adieus; Mrs. Collins stood back of a chair at attention: the nurse.

"Where are you going now?" Susanna heard herself asking him, as she withdrew her hand. She hated his tone, she told herself; it rubbed her raw, as it were; and she hated even more that woman one had to think of and become conscious of whenever one became conscious of him;—that horrible selfish aborted female, who coloured off on him and besmudged everything he said. She was indeed filled with hatred such as she never felt before for this woman; and she wished that she could injure her, injure her through her husband, and injure her more directly through him, through this lover of hers, whose fragrance was that of violets and who spoke like a Sunday-school teacher, and was the abject lover of this horrible woman.

He looked about, a little lost. "Oh," he repeated, "where am I going? I suppose to my room, and I've forgotten where it is." He laughed a little. "It's rather a beastly room, I noticed, without anything coming in at the window but a wall—I suppose that's why I've forgotten where it is, and all. . . ." He held on to the back of a chair, supporting himself; his eyes again looked lost—as though they too did not know where they were; he looked even more dreadfully tired than before.

"Why don't you sit down and stay here with me, at the hearth, while Mrs. Collins finds out where your room is?"

Love Days

"Would she be so very good?— Would you? Thank you," he said simply, sinking into the empty chair before the hearth. "It's very good of you. Don't mind me at all, treat me as another piece of furniture like this wonderful chair." He stretched his hands out to the fire, now low.

"Throw a log or two on the fire," Susanna suggested, as she lay down again in her lounge-chair, Mrs Collins finally having left to make inquiries about the room, after it had been settled that she should have her dinner downstairs at once and then order Susanna's to be served upstairs.— During this settlement the idea of having Hughie dine with her had run through Susanna's mind. Having him here would be withdrawing just so much power from Agatha; while opposed to the plan was her exhaustion, physical and mental. She felt that she was indeed too tired, too confused, to receive new impressions intelligently, and she feared them raw and simple,—she knew not why.

Hugh was obediently fixing the fire, on his knees. After throwing in a second heavy log he bent over and turned his face away; there was a convulsive movement throughout his body, a few moments of immobility, and then he slowly rose, supporting himself by the chair he gradually sank into. "Swank fire now," he remarked unsmilingly, staring into it with unseeing eyes.

Susanna was looking at him, and as she looked, she saw him freshly as it were, in singleness, disentangled,—the way she did not wish to see him. She saw his young bent shoulders and the thin line of his Byronic jaw—so it struck her imagination—and the touching sweetness of his firm young mouth, and his young throat, and his hollow cheeks, and the furrowed brow under his black hair, and the old and hopeless blue eyes, set deep in among their black lashes, as though they hated to see, and saw but little. And she became aware that he looked very ill; all of a sudden she suspected that he was horribly ill;—but she could not be sure . . . her eyes were so tired, and her head was, and she might easily be deceived.

"I wonder whether you would mind if I left you alone with the fire for half an hour, while I rest and get ready for dinner." She rose, he started to rise too. She was above him, holding him down, her hands on his shoulders. "Don't get up," she ordered; "you're more tired than I am—a little advice might well be

Susanna Moore's

shoved at you. Stay just as you are, and look into the fire, and see fairies or go to sleep until I return,—and then we'll see." She smiled at him deliciously with the starry eyes and the unguarded lips of the girl Susanna; and she felt her smile and recognized it but she could not help it. "Will you?"

"I will." He smiled his tremulous smile, and there was a note of touched surprise in his sweet voice. "You're being very kind to me; you're—I've almost told you: you're making me happy again."

"Well then, making you happy is too easy to be amusing," Susanna called back dryly, as she closed her door.

She had Jeanne take off her gown, and she looked at it inimically as it lay on the chair. It was a clean metally streaky thing, but it now seemed messy and sticky with the atmosphere it had so inappropriately been absorbing. It was right for John, beautifully right, but not for John's complications, who turned a sharp flame into a glimmering fairy thing. Susanna laughed ironically: really he was ridiculous, seen at a distance, that man in there, who turned flame into childish glimmer and the smell of fire into violets, and was the lover of a horror belonging to a blond beast.

She pulled the jewels from her ears and throat, and lay down on her bed, while Jeanne sat sewing under the one light that was left lighted.— Already she felt rested, away from all, by herself. . . . She wondered whether other people needed solitude as much as she did. He, in there, did; she had heard it in his voice as he declined the dinner. Well, she was giving it to him now. She was kinder to him than was his sweetheart. And she would be still kinder: she would see and hear all that that other woman was insensitive to, wrapped up in brutish vanity. She would teach her a lesson. And she would amuse herself; yes,—with both of them. With John, because she needed him to distract her from her hatred of the world, and with this doctor because—because he was a hypocrite, and with both, because they were content to submit to such a woman. . . .

She thought of John; of what he had given her, and what he would give. . . . She thought of his kisses;—thinking of them seemed to send an influx of strength, of stiffening, fighting strength, through her body. She felt that she could have planned, joyously, a series of new moves, new exciting assaults

Love Days

and retreats and contests, to test him; to see whether he was stronger than she was; whether his strength and his control could wear her out after strengthening her—wear her out with sensation. She could have thought of a hundred things to make the game dangerous; to make him dangerous,—so that she might feel danger, feel something, through her coating of hostile apathy.

But she couldn't think—with that tired man in there, looking into the fire with hopeless eyes. . . .

And she didn't want to think. She would just lie still, and feel as tired as she looked, as, apparently they all thought she looked.

Yet—she didn't really feel particularly tired any more; she felt rather well physically. Even the over stimulation of her mind was subsiding. . . . If the music were not floating up from downstairs, making her realize where she was, and that a Baron and Baroness existed downstairs, she might easily imagine that she was at home, with a sweet, harmless young man, tired of life, waiting for her harmlessly in the next room in order to refresh himself in innocent admiration at her source.

Susanna closed her eyes; Pelléas and Mélisande was being played, inadequately played. It annoyed her that this should be played, and she rose, in order to escape hearing it;—the half hour was passed, anyway.

She put on a white teagown, a silk thing trimmed with marabou, and she knotted her hair loosely, so that it stood out about her face youthfully, and she pinched her cheeks pink. She laughed as she scrutinized the result. Certainly she looked much more like a fairy now: she looked a little like a scrapbook picture, in fact. Perhaps by tomorrow she would clip her hair again;—what would the blond beast say!

Susanna laughed quite gaily, and, after directing Jeanne to have her dinner order duplicated and served as soon as possible, she went into the parlour.

From the door she saw that Dr. Hugh was asleep; he had fallen asleep in the position in which she had left him, fallen into deep sleep.

Susanna sat down opposite him, feeling acutely and pleasantly

Susanna Moore's

the strangeness of intimacy with this sleeping stranger. . . . She thought "stranger" but she thought is conventionally; she did not feel it. Sleep had changed this incomprehensible man into a boy—a pathetic boy.

How lovely was sleep, she thought. Even Pol in sleep. . . . She smiled ironically. The strident Agatha had no doubt thus looked upon this man, and had thus reflected. . . . She flushed. Disgusting, disgusting Agatha, who looked upon this man in intimacy in the Christmas holidays, and at the blond beast the rest of the time. She cast a long look at Hugh. Her eyes and mouth went hard. No, the blond beast would not be beautiful and innocent and deep in sleep. . . . And the odour of battle floated from her memory to her head, as it were, and her eyes lit up.—She became oblivious of the sleeping man, as she thought on the absent one, of their contest of wit and strength, and of the powers they might yet awaken in one another. "Life-in-Death" was how she had thought of it—their relation; it seemed to her now that "Hell-in-Life" would better describe what might come.—But no matter! Hell was better, a thousand times better than the death in life, the white and empty dry nothingness she had been tasting. . . .

She looked from her white gown, her so frivolous symbol, to the sleeper again. Wasn't she perhaps being a little melodramatic about things, she asked herself, as she gazed at his tired, suffering, helpless form. If one could taste an illicit love—and an unworthy one—and remain so quite without joy or excitement or sensation as he seemed to be,—wasn't she being a little ridiculous? . . .

But, she told herself, she wasn't an Agatha, and John wasn't a violet scented clergyman, gone wrong into science. Clergyman! Horror upon horror! How had this flattening deadening thought inserted itself into her mind, unforeseen!

Susanna stared at the sleeping man, genuinely appalled—quite stupefied with distaste. . . . After a moment she burst out laughing. Her laugh awakened him; he opened his eyes, saw Susanna laughing at him, and realizing that he had been asleep, he laughed too, a little sleepily, but happily, with the same pearling music that his voice contained.

"How perfectly awful of me," he gasped trying to rise; and

Love Days

the next moment he held his handkerchief to his mouth, suppressing a cough with the same convulsive movements Susanna had before noticed.

She rose. She placed her hands on his shoulders as before, to restrain him.

"If you get up and go away, I shall think it's because you like it here only when you are asleep.— Mrs. Moore," she drawled "requests the pleasure of Dr. Whittleby's company at dinner (which is now entering the door), subsequent to his nap at her hearth, and prior to his descent to the lobby."

Hugh looked at her; at last she saw in his eyes something concretely hers,—of her causation:—a shade of astonished and sweet gratitude, which his smile had carried up into them.

"You confuse me with your kindness," he said, "but since I am not dressed to dine with a lady—"

"Since I am not dressed to dine with a gentleman, we'll dine here like two invalids," Susanna drawled with a meaning look; "and we'll be supervised by the great and famous nurse, Mrs. Collins."

Mrs. Collins was back in the room, already engaged in superintending the serving of dinner, laughing at Susanna in her generous, naïve, amiable way, a way which helped Susanna to endure her trying mental experiments, so to say, since her thinking never left the experimental stage. And a way which made Susanna think of her as Collinsy, and present her elaborately as Mrs. Michael Grant Collins, while wondering what kind of a man the late Michael Collins had been to leave her so very Florence-Granty after twenty years of union.

"Mrs. Moore hasn't been as cheery as this in a long time, Doctor," she stated, placing the chairs with satisfaction. Susanna laughed. "It's good you've come; you've done her good already, Doctor."

Susanna laughed again. "Mrs. Collins seems to think that you are *my* cousin and friend and—and that you have come to spend the holidays with *me*," she said.

"I do not," Mrs. Collins answered, a little offended. "But I wish he were your physician. Dr. Guyau—"

"Be careful of what you say before the profession," Susanna teased.

"Indeed, that's true!" Hugh smiled.

Susanna Moore's

"So it is," Mrs. Collins agreed, "and you know the rest of the sentence."

The dinner continued in this tone under Mrs. Collins's presidency and chairmanship and speakership. Susanna laughed a lot and ate quite heartily; Hugh smiled a lot, looked at Susanna a great deal, and ate quite heartily.

"I think our dinner quite a success. I think we have done rather well for two invalids. What do you think, Mrs. Collins?"

"Whatever Mrs. Collins may think, I, who as the doctor am morally obliged to know, pronounce it a phenomenal exhibition for two people of any kind." Hugh said. "One of them hasn't eaten as heartily, throwing together the entire lot of messes of the beastly two days of travel."

"Did it take you two days from London?" Mrs. Collins asked.

"I don't live in London; I live in the hill country, in what you Americans call the Lake Country, so it took me all of two days, and a night spent in Paris. I hate travelling like—well, like hell," he added, expansively. "I hate looking for my clothes and my meals and all the rest. I seem to have to look for everything when I'm away from home,—even my thoughts get mislaid." He laughed a little.

"I should think that might be rather nice," Susanna said.

"If they were to get lost, it might be very nice; but they crop up again in the wrong spots, I'm afraid." His eyes went inscrutable.

"Not now?" Susanna asked, eying him interestedly.

"Not now," he answered, but with a glint of astonished fear in his eyes as they looked deep into hers. If ever they broke up altogether, his eyes, she thought,—how dreadful. . . .

"I'm afraid you're a poor traveller, Doctor," Mrs. Collins shook her head; "or else you're spoiled at home."

"Or both," Susanna said.

"I am," he rejoined. "I have a brick of a house-keeper. She is my memory and my social secretary and—well, she really is my whole family and household." He sang her praises.

So he lived in the country, alone with a house-keeper and servants; far from the Baron's place. Susanna found herself dying to know how he managed about seeing his friends, but unable to ask him questions. But Mrs. Collins, having no reason to conceal

Love Days

her interest, both personal and professional, plied him with questions.

No, she heard, he rarely went to London; his practice kept him busy; he spent his vacations in the hills and at Rettigheims; half and half. He had spent Christmas with Daisy's family, his nearest relatives, before she was married, and now he spent it with them. They came up to the hills to see him once in a while; so did other friends; but not often; he was too busy.

Susanna, in the course of this information, felt fairly stunned: she kept remembering with shocks that he belonged to the Rettigheims, for she kept forgetting it constantly, now that he was physically free from their presence. So, while Mrs. Collins was discussing his practice with him, she, staring at him, was trying to think him through to some kind of an understanding of him.

"Oh, I'm sorry, I'm boring you, Mrs. Moore. I knew I should! Pray don't look so cruelly bored!" He smiled at her quite unself-consciously. "I shall keep quite still now."

"You puzzle me, on the contrary," Susanna said.

He laughed. "I'm probably too simple for you to believe in."

"Are you?" she asked.

"I've grown excessively simple, quite too simple; I've begun to bore myself as the subject of my self-consciousness, at any rate."

"That isn't so horribly simple," Susanna judged, pleased with his phrase.

"Thank you; you are kindly making allowances, I perceive," he said, and quickly added: "I'm trying to show off, I expect."

"I'm only taking your unasked word for it," Susanna said with some heat, feeling funnily girlish; "you've no right to reprove me for believing you." She laughed at herself. "I'm sure now that you are simple: you're contagiously so."

They both laughed.

They were again seated in the chairs before the hearth. The table was cleared, Mrs. Collins had disappeared.

"How do you like me as a white fairy?" she asked him.

"Oh," he said after a pause, softly, "you're all right for a little boy's fairy, the kind you don't mind being; but you're no good for a man's fairy, the kind you do mind being,—so it's quite all right I expect."

Susanna Moore's

"Oh," Susanna drawled with her most delicious, enchanted smile, her eyes starry, "I'm no good for you this way—and why not?"

"Why should I tell you since you don't want to be a grown-up's fairy?" he laughed.

"Because I put this on for you."

"So I suspected," he said, "to please my simplicity.— May I?" He took his pipe from his pocket; she nodded; he put it back. "Well, it does not please my simplicity."

"No?" she drawled, "And do you know why, or are you too simple to know why?"

"I'm probably too simple to know the truth, but it's quite simple to have private theories. You were, you see, a fairy to me when you were gold and glittering and brittle and hard and knowing and mysterious and unreal and rather terrifying, really—"

"Yes?" Susanna said, pleased. "You make me sound like a goblin."

"I hadn't finished."

"I beg your pardon," she said elaborately.

"A golden Lilithy fairy, who, I suspected, with a wave of her wand could transform herself into a sweet white lovely human generous Eve-like girl—"

"You didn't," Susanna interrupted.

"Didn't what?"

"Didn't suspect."

He laughed, looking at her in his tender way, but answered nothing.

"And you have the sequence—the chronological sequence—reversed. It's the white one who has turned into the glittering hard one."

"But here she is, to rejoice mortal man," he said gently.

"Just a momentary reversion to type," Susanna said, and her expression suited the golden gown.

"I think my reason was chronological, too—" He was moved; Susanna saw it in the sudden light in his eyes and the smile that trembled on his tender lips. "It was how you were when you first happened—your birthday dress for me—you see; no other could ever quite—"

Mrs. Collins entered. "The Baron would like to know whether

Love Days

he may come in, for just a moment. I think he has come for you, Doctor."

Hugh rose. "It isn't late, I hope! By Jove, it's half past nine."

"Ask the Baron in," Susanna then said. Mrs. Collins opened the door for him.

"Well, my dear Hugh, you're en retard," he called, as he kissed Susanna's hand formally. "I don't know what dire punishment awaits you downstairs, but the lady at all events has been kept waiting."

"Oh, I can't forgive myself. I had quite forgotten. Where is Daisy?"

"In the lounge on the sofa, but she looks as though she were in the hall of judgment on the throne."

"Where is that?" Hugh asked, a little dazed.

"The hall of judgment?" The Baron seemed rather amused.

"I walked through the hotel only once—on my arrival, and noticed nothing but that it seemed horribly large. I suppose I'll find it."

"By the way, Doctor," Mrs. Collins put in, "we took the liberty of changing your room to one on the third floor, No. 79, with a view of the lake and mountains. As you hadn't unpacked we thought you wouldn't mind."

"Oh, but it's so good, so very good of you, Mrs. Collins; I don't know how to thank you. I shall think of you when I look out of the window and don't see the wall coming in." He laughed to cover his feeling.

"It was Mrs. Moore's suggestion," and Mrs. Collins waved his thanks over to Susanna.

Hugh stood before Susanna. He prepared to say something, looked at the Baron, who stood beside her, holding her in his eyes, and said something else. "I think I shall have to write you a word of thanks if I may—"

"Be sure to write it to the golden me then," Susanna replied with the hard eyes and the ironic mouth with which she had witnessed his distress over Daisy, and his gratitude.

He looked into her eyes with his deep eyes that hoped for nothing, as he took her apathetic hand, and said, smiling his tremulous smile. "I shall write to whatever you I choose. Goodnight!"

Susanna Moore's

But his smile awakened no answering smile in Susanna, and he noticed it. He looked about, lost for a moment. "Goodnight, Mrs. Collins!" he called, and hastened out.

John looked at Susanna meaningly. She only laughed. He was obliged to make the best of Mrs. Collins's chaperonage.

"This white gown again . . ." he murmured.

"For your cousin," she answered.

"But why for him?" he asked, quite genuinely astonished.

"To please him," Susanna heard herself replying sharply.

"But why please him. He is pleased already; sufficiently pleased for his taste."

Susanna stared at John. This was really rather too callous, she thought, even— Yet, why not be callous and brutal, if the truth was brutal and callous; at least it was honest—it had at least the dignity of honesty.

"To punish her for not appreciating you," she laughed cuttingly.

An ironic smile passed over his face for an instant; then he said: "Susanna, we waste our time. It is better merely to look and to think" he did both expressively, "than to talk like this. It removes us from one another, instead of— I'd rather go. I cannot bear it. I shall go." He looked in the direction of Mrs. Collins who sat under a remote lamp in the attitude of reading.

"Mrs. Collins," Susanna called, "I wonder whether you will be good enough to tell Jeanne to get things ready; I shall be going to bed in ten minutes."

Mrs. Collins took the hint. "Certainly, dear! Goodnight, Baron! Remember now, Mrs. Moore, I shall give you ten minutes and then I shall come for you."

"She suspects you," Susanna laughed, as John stood before her, ardent and energetic. "No listen," she pursued, "I'm half-dead—"

"You are not," he interrupted, "you are younger and lovelier than I have ever seen you—You look like a girl, an untouched, unapproachable girl." He sank on his knee, looking up to her with eyes full of light.

"Get up, please," she said querulously. "I may look that way, but I don't want to be treated that way,—not by you. I don't want to be treated at all. Don't touch me. Listen to me."

Love Days

He sat down on a cushion at her feet; it was one of the English things he did.

"I'm half-dead—but I'll make it a quarter dead of deference to your opinion." He said nothing but held her in his glowing, watchful, implacable stare. "Because," she continued, "I've had a very exciting day—the first in aeons . . . aeons. I had rather an exacting visitor this morning, and again this afternoon, and all his family and family complications along with him. . . . And then, after he and his dramatic domestic atmosphere have exhausted me, up he turns again,—in anti-climactic fashion. . . ."

"But this is no anti-climax for me, since it is enough to hold you in my eyes to dream dreams that soar to the very apex of the climax. Susannah—"

"Johannes, you must go now. You can still hold me in the eyes of your memory, and dream." She was a little distrait.

He stood above her now, moved. "There is to be granted no truce? No momentary meeting as balm to my aching heart?"

Susanna held out her hand apathetically. He held it for a moment, and dropped it deliberately. "I thank you, no."

Susanna laughed, pleased. "Until tomorrow then, Johannes."

"Until tomorrow, Susanna."

Mrs. Collins here entered the room. The Baron did something vaguely suggestive of clicking his heels, bowed formally to both ladies and strode to the door in his un-English fashion.

"Baron Johannes," Susanna called.

He turned.

"Sie haben sich ver-ab-schiedet wie ein Herr Major von seiner Frau Ge-ne-ralin, ent-setz-licher-weise;" she drawled in her distinct slow German. "Kommen Sie sofort zurück, und ver-ab-schieden Sie sich wie eine blonde Bestie von seinem bevor-ste-hendem Opfer, ent-zück-ender-weise."

She laughed challengingly as he hastened back with shining eyes, and kneeling formally raised the hem of her skirt to his lips, saying: "Der Göttin der Grausamkeit."

"Ich bin stolz auf Sie, Johannes," Susanna declaimed.

"Ich bete Dich an, Göttin."

"Die Göttin der Grausamkeit erhört kein Gebet."

He raised passionate eyes to hers, appealing and yet threatening.

Susanna Moore's

"Die Grausamkeit wird nur durch Grausamkeit bewältigt," she ended.

They looked at one another.

"I accept," he said.

"It's my opinion," Mrs. Collins remarked, "that for all his playfulness, that man has fallen in love with you."

"Well, he can't fall very far, with a perfect chaperon like you to pick him up." Susanna swept past into the bedroom.

Mrs. Collins followed determinedly. "I don't understand you Mrs. Moore."

Susanna turned on her. "And if he were in love with me, Mrs. Collins—what of it? Could you blame him?"

"Of course I could blame him. With a wife,—and his wife on the spot with him!" Her face was red with surprise and shock.

"Well, my dear Mrs. Collins," Susanna treated her with her eyes as a cat treats a mouse with her paws, "you need not worry about the wife: she is provided for."

"What ever do you mean?"

"I mean that the Doctor is her lover—it is an open secret."

"The Doctor—what doctor? Dr. Guyau?"

"Dr. Whittleby."

Mrs. Collins had a moment of stupefaction; Susanna sat on the bed and enjoyed her triumph. These Florence Grant Collinses who chaperoned in a world they did not even see should occasionally be enlightened.

"Your doctor, whose room you changed," she drawled; "who smells of violets and babbles like a sweet brook in spring, your Dr. Hughie, who is at this moment, although almost ill with fatigue, downstairs with his exacting mistress, his Daisy."

But Mrs. Collins was regaining her composure.

"Of all crazy things! Why it's plain crazy! Any one who isn't blind can see that the poor man is sick with consumption, and mighty sick at that—mighty sick, the poor boy!— Why, what is the matter with you, dear?"

For Susanna had crumpled upon the bed, and Mrs. Collins's "what's the matters" were devoid of all emotion but professional solicitude.

Susanna from her withered depths replied chokingly: "I'm sick to my stomach."

Love Days

"I'm not surprised." Mrs. Collins awoke to personality for a moment. "So am I."

But Susanna's state was more complete and less symbolic than Mrs. Collins's. She refused to budge from her position, obliging her nurse and maid to manipulate her as though all the bones in her body were broken;—she refused to budge so much as an inch. She ignored them completely.

Mrs. Collins, after having gotten her into her nightgown with infinite skill, patience, and astonishment at her sudden obstinacy, felt her pulse to see whether she should call in the doctor. No, she had no fever. "You have no fever, dear," she said soothingly without any results in the way of a response. She suggested a dozen remedies; Susanna vouchsafed no reply.

Susanna was busy feeling sea-sick, and wondering why every other woman, if she did anything sudden like this, fainted prettily, while she only got sick all over. The others had the benefit of unconsciousness, delicious, refreshing unconsciousness, which she had often come near to, but never had achieved. Instead everything went wrong in her, everything but her mind; that continued to go on like a clock, inexorably, to torment her, who was so tired of thinking than which she had done nothing else since the happy delirium of pneumonia. . . .

It was odd, she thought, how much stronger her brain was than her eyes, which were watering, or her muscles which were trembling, or her nerves that jumped, or her stomach that could be prevented from doing all of these things only by the utmost exertion of will-power and the least exertion of muscular power. Did this Mrs. Collins not know what sea-sickness was on land? Did she know only consumption and love—love and consumption. . . .

"How about a little burnt brandy?" she heard her say. . . . At last a sensible idea. . . .

"A lot," she answered, and waited in painful immobility for it to come.

Others swooned and were drugged by happy unconsciousness, yes. She was drugged by pain. Yes, that was exactly it: her only drug was pain; and that was why she would choose her own style of pain, the style that suited her . . . irrespective of all else . . . the kind of pain that had some dignity . . . some clean tragedy. . . .

Susanna Moore's

Consumption and love—love and consumption. . . pain. . . .

She drank the brandy, lots of it, and the happy unconsciousness for which she longed came gradually, on the crests of fiery little waves that swept in and out, in and out, burning her thoughts away.

“WELL, Mrs. Moore, at last we’ve a fine day for you;—when do you expect to get up?” Mrs. Collins called cheerily as she entered the bedroom synchronously with the exit of the breakfast tray. She pulled her watch from her belt and looked inquiringly at Susanna who lay back on her cushions, pale, worn and apathetic, with a very incongruous stiff silver scarf on her shoulders.

“The day after Christmas,” Susanna said, staring through Mrs. Collins.

“Now look here, my dear Mrs. Moore: I’ve given in to your whims for two days because the weather has been so wretched; but today is a beautiful day and you have got to benefit by it.”

“Now look here, my dear Mrs. Collins: I appreciate your concern, but I’m more than twelve years old.”

“You make it very difficult for me to do my duty by Dr. Devereux, Mrs. Moore; you know very well what his orders are, and you know that lying in bed in a stuffy room is weakening.”

“But—Mrs. Collins, I don’t want to be disagreeable,—but after all you must tell yourself that I must have very good reasons for staying in bed in a stuffy room,” Susanna tried to placate her, “and if you really find it stuffy, you can wrap me up, and open the window wide and let in the oxygen, and if it will relieve your conscience you can call in Dr. Guyau again.”

“To talk about the guests and their jewels and bridge and gossip,” Mrs. Collins sniffed. “I’d much rather call in Dr. Whittleby.”

Susanna sat up. “Do you think he’d come?” she asked as the blood mounted to her cheeks and something stopped her breath from issuing.

“Why of course he’d come, if I asked him to— Oh, you mean on account of Dr. Guyau! He needn’t know; he could think it a friendly visit, if he did hear of it. And after that, we’ll see. I’d take the blame, in any case.”

“Have you seen him—how is he?”

Love Days

"He looks the same—poorly. He asks for you every time I run across him, and I hardly know what to say. So do the others ask for you, the Baron and the Crosbys and—well all of them. They have been cooped up in the hotel for the last few days on account of the blizzard." Mrs. Collins had a determined air of finality: this much would she say and no more, for she would keep her skirts clear of any chance of catching up the loose ends of scandal. She had lived in hotels before and she thought to know that gossiping was a kill-time and a social necessity, like a poor orchestra, for instance,—no realer. Some of it might be true, but as you never could tell which of it, why swallow any. . . .

Susanna had had her letter from Hugh on Sunday, and notes from the Baron on both days. This morning had brought a letter from him, mailed in the village yesterday. He wrote well, but then he had much to say. She had answered none of these communications; neither did she answer the telephone, which was situated in the parlour, so that she had a good reason for avoiding it. She tried to forget all of these people, and as she could not concentrate on a book, she spent most of her time in looking out of the window and recalling incidents of her past,—any incidents and days and hours that came to mind easily. She dwelled on them and she got some feeling of reality from them; often, when she came dripping out of the colourful past and struck the window and the white picture in it and her white bed, she was obliged to make an effort to remember where she was. And she noticed that she got more feeling from these present things too;—from the landscape, and from her wintry, white room, and the things about; she felt the wet more intensely, and the white and grey, and the texture of the pines, and the rhythm of the swirling snow, and the extraordinary concentrated cold light in her room, and, in the afternoon, the glow of the silk-shaded yellow lamps:—she lost herself pleasantly in them. She was often able to stave off that awful habit of thinking that had befallen her.

But at night, in the dark, when she did not even get a sensation from the comfort of her body,—since through having lain here all day there was no accretion of comfort,—on the contrary,—at night her thoughts flocked back, or rather, the thinking started up again, like a dynamo. Love and marriage and misery and apathy and ugliness and illness and pain and danger and consumption all

Susanna Moore's

came, interlaced, to attack her. And Pol and Dr. Devereux and Ewart and Turro and the Baron and Dr. Whittleby all joined together to assail her, as in a fever. She felt caught in their meshes as would be a fish that could get out in no other way than by thinking itself out. And she thought and thought; she thought all kinds of things, realistic and fantastic things, about them all, but she could not think anything really final about her relationship to them, past, present or future. And so she was unable to swim away from them definitely, but swam around and around, finding the element that encompassed them, and in which she swam, opaque, ugly,—even horrible. Finding the world horrible.

If Johannes were to grab her and run her out of this net, or to crush her, or to do anything to make her unconscious of her disgust in this ugly pool, it was the best she could hope for.— But probably he would fall in love with her in the same stupid and stultifying way in which Pol Grodz had, and in that case she would probably die, really die, of too much knowledge of nothingness. . . . And though his wife had not mattered—she was nothing but a parasite smothering him—now this man Hugh was tagging on too, with a strangely heavy and obstructing weight. . . . The thing was losing its simplicity, and was growing too intricate. . . . It would take more strength than this clever and strong and clean—yes, clean—Johannes had, to drag her from the pool that had in it the mire of so hideous a thing as the hidden relation of this faithless woman with a creature who exhaled the fragrance of violets and smiled so that your heart turned around, and was really ill with consumption, as Mrs. Collins knew, and—

John and she—: if they became lovers, they would be lovers openly and frankly and proudly, for they were strong and well and handsome and beyond good and evil in their own law. . . . But she, that Agatha, she was a petty, incomplete, lying creature. . . . And he—he was sick; and had hopeless eyes; and he spoke like a Sunday-school boy sunk in the falseness of the distinction between good and evil—

How dared he, then—how dared he!— And Susanna tried to realize how indignant, how outraged she felt;—but she did not succeed; she ended each time with feeling incredulous. She *felt* incredulous, yes, but her mind, viewing him from a distance, accepted the judgment of her own code: he was a hypocrite so great as to be unrealizable, incredible; and more than anything else muddying

Love Days

the pool in which she was so dreadfully immersed, so hopelessly — More than any other ugly thing . . . he . . .

Toward morning sleep usually had come to relieve her from feverish thoughts for a few hours; and after she awakened in the bright room, with the little impressions and sensations shooting around it, she recovered some degree of peace.

But Mrs. Collins saw how poorly she looked, and Dr. Guyau having had only a temporary effect of beguiling her into polite brightness, Mrs. Collins had now thought of Dr. Whittleby.

"How are you going to manage it?" Susanna asked.

"Manage what?"

"To get him to come?"

"Dr. Whittleby? Never you mind. I think this afternoon would be best."

"Oh, any time after my hair's been brushed," Susanna said indifferently; "and I'd like the manicure, if you can get her for me."

After a time Mrs. Collins left, and Susanna sat looking out of the open window, propped up against cushions, and enveloped in furs. The sky was deep blue, and everything else was white and glittering. The windows that opened out into the landscape were frosted; a church steeple, frosted too, rose into the blue beyond the frosted woods; its bell began to strike the hour. It's like a Christmas card, Susanna thought; it will be like a New Years' card at sunset with a wet red streak in the sky; nothing will be missing but an old man carrying faggots in one corner of it. . . . The air was crisp and dry; it did feel rather nice. She wondered whether her nose was red as well as cold. . . .

She felt strangely peaceful. . . . But that was deceptive: when night came again her sleeplessness would dive up undiminished, and confound her. Why had she not thought to get Dr. Guyau to prescribe veronal? . . . Perhaps Hughie would . . . but probably he wouldn't be permitted to make out prescriptions here. But perhaps he had some with him. . . . If he had consumption. . . .

So that was what Dr. Devereux feared for her; that was what it was like. . . . It wasn't so bad,—but for the infrequent convulsive movements; and probably they didn't hurt him,—only her. . . .

Susanna Moore's

This was why he lived in the hills, alone: for his cure. No wonder he disliked travelling, and being dragged about by— But what was the sense of thinking “no wonder”; it was just exactly that: a wonder . . . everything about this man gave rise to wonder. His being her cousin; his being in any way connected with them was to be wondered at. He seemed so disconnected, so detached from them,—he seemed so much more belonging to her and Mrs. Collins. . . . Silly, Susanna thought, he seems belonging to no one but himself. . . . She wrenched her thoughts away from him, and looked at her hands: she hoped Mrs. Collins hadn't forgotten about the manicure.

Mrs. Collins had not forgotten, and she soon reappeared with the manicure and the news that Dr. Whittleby had gone out but would be back for luncheon. Also with the hotel news, which for Mrs. Collins restricted itself to actual statistical facts: that a family of six children had arrived from India, and a lady from Paris with a monkey and a coloured maid; facts for the reception of which Mrs. Collins found that Mrs. Moore had an exaggeratedly deaf ear.

Susanna watched her fingers being manicured, and wished that she had a hundred instead of ten to while away the time with; some Indian deities had; why not she. . . . The girl bending over her was young and pretty, with blue eyes, and dimples and a sweet shy way. What a rotten disillusion was in store for her, if she had any illusions of romance and beauty, thought Susanna. But perhaps she had none. Perhaps to be suddenly supported in leisure instead of doing other people's nails was romance enough for her. And she was used to subordination and submission, and she would give these in exchange for support, and expect nothing else. How little people seemed to ask of life—: what was it held them contented therein? . . .

“Oh, Madame,” the girl was saying, “your hands are so beautiful that it gives me pleasure just to look at them and touch them.”

So she had a sense of beauty, like herself . . . poor thing! “*Merci, Mademoiselle, pour le joli compliment; your own are very pretty, and ought to be a source of pleasure to you.*”

Mrs. Collins was disappointed that Dr. Whittleby was out. She had decided that he should see Susanna in the morning so

Love Days

that Susanna might get up in time for luncheon. She now suggested that Susanna should get up anyway.

"Oh no," said Susanna firmly, and paused. Mrs. Collins looked at her inquiringly. "We must make him believe that I am very ill, far too ill to get up, or where would be the point of calling him in," she ended lamely. Mrs. Collins did not quite see this; neither did Susanna, but she felt that she was not yet ready to get up and dip into the actualities that awaited her; she felt that these days had after all been a kind of "soulagement": that she had in spite of everything been less unhappy.

There was a good deal of fussing in connection with luncheon. Susanna wished to eat none of the things Mrs. Collins wished her to eat; it sufficed to hear the names of dishes in Mrs. Collins's New England accent for them to taste in Susanna's anticipatory imagination like baked beans and doughnuts and similar horrors. If Mrs. Collins went on suggesting she wouldn't leave a single dish eatable. "Now I know what I'll have," she interrupted; "I'll have caviar and champagne, Moët et Chandon. And an artichoke and cold chicken," she added, to avoid trouble, though she had no intention of eating them.— So that was settled.

Mrs. Collins was to take a walk after her luncheon; so she wouldn't bring Dr. Whittleby up before Susanna had had a good long nap.— So that was settled too.

Everything was settled, and there was no more fussing for a time, and things ran according to schedule, and there was, at least, quiet.

When at the appointed time, long after luncheon, Mrs. Collins came back, she found Susanna on her lace cushions with her silver scarf wrapped around her, fast asleep. "She ate most heartily, Madame," Jeanne whispered, "and fell asleep immediately." The champagne, thought Mrs. Collins; perhaps she should have thought of it herself before this, since it produced such results,—for she thought to see that Susanna also looked much better; fresher and less drawn. She left again on tiptoe; she would ask Dr. Whittleby to wait for a while.

And when, in another hour, she returned with Hugh, Susanna, still asleep in the bright room, propped up against her lace pillows on her bright white bed, in her bright silver shroud, with glittering diamonds in her ears, a little like a royal corpse painted to simu-

Susanna Moore's

late life,—Susanna opened her eyes, awakened by the sounds at the door, where Mrs. Collins and Hugh stood, undecided.

"Oh," she called, a little sleepily, "the Doctor—M. le Docteur, bonjour."

Mrs. Collins placed a chair for the Doctor by the side of the bed, and Hugh advanced to it, smiling. He walked like an Englishman, on the balls of his feet, gracefully, and his walk at least was not that of a sick man. But how ill he looked in the opaque glare of the white room. How deep the lines in his forehead, and how sunken the hollows of his cheeks, and how pale his brown skin against the jet black hair and eyebrows. And how seared his deep blue eyes. . . . No, that wasn't exactly the word—but no matter. And how oddly young his throat and his touching smile and his clumsy, unconscious grace.

This flashed through Susanna's mind as Hugh walked to the chair, seated himself, took her hand in his, and smiled at her sweetly, as though she were a child. His bedside manner was his usual manner intensified; yes, that was it: his usual manner was a bedside manner. She was, however, saying: "And did M. le Docteur win at bridge last night, and did the Countess X get back her pearls from her husband, and Toto, does Toto still refuse to eat anything but *foie-gras*?"

"It seems to me," he answered in French, "that Madame has not the air of needing a doctor today," and he still held her hand and smiled at her as though she were a child. "What do you think, Mrs. Collins?"

"Well, she refuses to get up at my orders, Doctor. I leave her to you. Call me when you want me; I shall be in the next room." Mrs. Collins' gentle hand banged the door decisively: this was Florence Grant's answer to the insinuations of the other night,—as Susanna realized with an amusement both innocent and ironic.

"How lovely is the light in here; bright and alive, and yet filled with peace." He gazed at her and censored something clamouring to be said.— "Do you want me to examine your lungs, Mrs. Moore?" he asked gently.

"There's nothing the matter with them, Dr. Whittleby," she said harshly. "I've been examined several times, and I feel that they're all right. It's just that I don't sleep nor eat well; feel fagged as you say; and anyway you couldn't prescribe for me, even if you were to examine me."

Love Days

"No, but I could report to Dr. Devereux," he said.

"Dr. Devereux; oh, of course Mrs Collins has told you;—but he put me in Dr. Guyau's charge; he might think it—"

"No, I know him well; he wouldn't mind. We're friends."

"Really? How odd. He was my father's friend and physician; did you work under him?"

"No, not exactly," he answered. "He was my friend and physician when I was ill a great many years ago—I owe him a great deal; I love him dearly. Perhaps you do too?" he added eagerly.

"No, I don't," Susanna said. "I admire him and I'm grateful to him. He's done a great deal for me too in a personal way. . . . But I don't love him. . . . I don't know why— Perhaps one can't love and feel grateful at the same time."

"Oh, I disagree with you—"

"Well, then probably one can. I'm usually wrong about things like this,—that is to say wrong for every one but myself. I know that I couldn't. I believe that love prevents one from feeling grateful, because when one loves one is potentially giving as much as one receives: there ceases to be a question of credit and debit.— Well, anyway, the only trouble with me seems to be that my organs of self-preservation don't function." She laughed. "Dr. Hugh," she added, "I think you need medical advice more than I do."

Susanna looked at him: he was stern; stern and infinitely pathetic, and she was caught by a spirit of playfulness, much to her own surprise.

"If I had a degree and I sat at your bedside with my bedside manner on—" she took his hand which lay on the edge of the bed in hers—a young healthy large ugly strong hand, she noted with astonishment, while she smiled at him with the childish unprotected smile and the starry eyes of other days, "I should say: My dear Mr. Whittleby, what is the trouble? You don't eat well otherwise you wouldn't be so thin, and you don't sleep well otherwise you wouldn't look so fagged, yet you must be happy otherwise you wouldn't smile so prettily: so if you are happy, you must be wanting to be well and if you want to get well, that is, according to authority, the only thing necessary in these cases of a weakness left by pneumonia. So what is the trouble, my dear boy?"

Susanna Moore's

He smiled and laughed in his tremulous way, and placed his other hand over the hand that held his. "Don't you want to get well?" he asked with infinite gentleness.

She hesitated. "Well, I want to want to," she replied dryly, and withdrew her hand.

"Oh,"—he was hurt,—“you, who have everything,” he murmured.

"Don't make snap judgments," she said, flushing with annoyance, when—as it were—she came to from her play, and found herself here. "Don't be Mrs. Collinsy. You can't afford to be genuinely Collinsy; you've seen too much and lived too much—You must know that it means nothing to say a thing like that." Her voice was excited and hard.

"You're quite right—I do know better; you beguiled me into an illusion for a moment. It isn't the first time," he added; "you are very—very obfuscating, Mrs. Moore."

"I hope not, Dr. Whittleby; I should be very uncomfortable standing between you and the light," and she sank back.

"Thank you so much for your consideration of me," he retorted, obviously hurt.

"If you wish to thank me for anything," she said, to make amends, for apparently he had some vanity in regard to something, though she could not make out what,—“thank me for wearing this stiff bristly shroud, and these heavy earrings, because they're glistening and the next thing to Christmas balls—”

"Quite—quite to please me—?" he asked with happy lips,—astonished.

"Quite."

"Then I'll have to write you another letter of thanks."

"It would seem as though you were out of the habit of thanking. Though you do it so prettily on paper," she added hastily with an eye to his disappearing smile. "I suppose you are in the habit of *being* thanked. I should like to have to thank you for something,—to show you how it is done," she laughed.

"I'd so much rather thank you; although I do it badly, I enjoy the feeling."

"And though gratitude is at odds with love," she added flipantly.

Love Days

"You know I don't agree with you," he said.

"What have you been doing with yourself since Saturday?" Susanna asked, and regretted the question.

"Nothing much, because of the weather. Looking at the view you provided me with; reading a little. . . ."

"What were you reading?"

He hesitated. "Some medical journals I'd brought. . . ."

"Oh, nothing more—"

"Yes, the Song of Solomon."

Susanna held her breath, and looked down. "You travel with the Bible; are you then a good Christian?" and she felt vaguely that on his answer depended everything to follow; from it suspended in a way the very chain of the future.

"To be a good Christian," he said, "is beyond the power of man, and to be an indifferent Christian is below the dignity of man, it would seem to me; and so I am not a Christian. I am a kind of free-lance adventurer, I am afraid, taking a chance with my own unsanctified perceptions of beauty.— And you?"

"If you are that," Susanna said with excited and shining eyes and a catch in her voice, "I'm only a vagrant who has not reached the realms of spiritual beauty;—not that I have not wished to—" and her voice died off, as she turned her eyes away and was met by the now golden sky, and was moved to think that some of this distant radiance was here intolerably manifest, arousing a nostalgic pain in her breast. . . .

"You make me feel a presumptuous fool," he was saying, "no better than a professional Christian—"

Susanna kept silence; she was too moved to speak.

"This morning," he changed the subject, "we had the swankest sleigh ride along the lake shore, with a view of the mountains running along with us. You should have been with us; you must come with us tomorrow; it will do you good."

"Who are 'us'?" Susanna asked sharply in a hard voice, feeling a little ill again.

"Daisy and myself."

"I shouldn't think of intruding," Susanna drawled with hard and glittering eyes on him. "I'll go with John."

"John has gone to England; left this morning."

"Indeed," Susanna managed to receive this with, but she felt more ill than ever.

Susanna Moore's

"He got word that his mare Belladonna was sick, his best mare—"

"So he went to England on account of a horse."

"Rather! Since I am here to look after Daisy, and he loves his horses beyond everything."

"Indeed," Susanna said again, with mounting colour and eyes that looked hunted,—and in fact she knew not where to rest them, seeing, wherever she looked, the muddy pool of her nights, and seeing it blacker than ever since she had been seduced into forgetting it by this man's magic power of deception. "Don't you think you do John an injustice?" and her breath came short and her eyes were so strange that no one could have helped seeing how badly disturbed she was.

"It was a stupid and crude way of putting it," he said, "too stupid for one who should know better, since John is a good fellow;—and has been a good pal to me as well as to his horses," he added lightly.

Susanna went pale; she thought of a dozen things she might fling at this man that would ease her in her moral discomfort: sharp piercing things; wounding things that would make him come out into the open, and give her back the peace of her certainties,—her certainties of reality. But looking at him, seeing him, she was unable to open the floodgates of her anger and disgust—in his presence.— And yet she had to have certainty—if she was to go on at all. She held on to herself, paling in the effort, and said: "I wasn't thinking of you,—that he preferred you to his horses; I was thinking of myself. I fancied that he was deeply fascinated by me." She looked at Hugh challengingly, with a bitter smile.

"So did I, to tell the truth," he rejoined simply, while Susanna stared in suspense. "He has a perfect voracity for beauty, and a fine appreciation for things of the intellect; he's thoroughly German, really, you know, and English country life is a bit rough on a man of culture of his type. He needs constant stimulation from the outside, and he doesn't get it. He's a good fellow, trying to make the best of things;—a victim—a kind of geographical victim—of fate. That is why he would be fascinated by you, Mrs. Moore; probably even a little in love with you in his deliberate fashion. . . ." Hugh's tone was worried and very apologetic.

Love Days

Susanna pulled herself together from the various emotions into which surprise had scattered her— “And are all these racial and psychological considerations needed to explain his being in love with me?” She looked at him with a mixture of anger and irony. He looked at her as though to say “you baby” and smiled at her silently. “And why do you think he is only a little in love with me? He thinks otherwise, and so do I.”

At last she had driven him out of his concealing calm, though it was not when she had most expected to. She had wounded him, for he winced as with pain. “Mrs. Moore!” he begged, as though begging her to unsay what she had said, and when she kept a stony silence, he repeated “Mrs. Moore!” with some despair.

There was a pause. Then, driven by her lack of response, with an effort he said: “Why should I have thought otherwise than as I thought—I cannot think otherwise now—since you are involved, and you would not be cruel;—you could not be so cruel, as to play with John seriously.”

“Cruel to whom?” Susanna shot at him. “To his wife who does not love him?” And she looked cruel indeed as she fixed triumphant and accusing eyes at this incomprehensible man whom she had now driven into the open, and whose lips were twitching with dismay, while he held a hand to his chest and the other in a white knuckled fist.

“Yes, I suppose it must be apparent that they don’t quite hit it off. . . . Of course it must, or you would not mention it. . . . But the difference between that, and John’s loving a woman like you is very great—very great— You will wound us all, Mrs. Moore, if you let it happen, and it will not happen, if you do not let it happen. . . . You will wound me very deeply, for I love Daisy.”

Susanna went livid, but he did not see her. “You love Daisy, but John shall not love me—why?”

“Why—Daisy is a sister to me,—a dear and only sister; the sharer of my childhood, the companion of my boyhood— And she is so good to me, so very good. They should perhaps not have married, they are not suited . . . neither can help that. But they might be still less happy, far less happy; Daisy might—oh,—”

“I don’t see how,” Susanna pursued relentlessly, “since she

Susanna Moore's

doesn't want him, and since she has you and would still have you. . . ."

Hugh looked at Susanna; his face was tragic. "She has my affection and devotion; she knows she can count on them, and they seem to bring her some comfort. But I'm a sick man, Mrs. Moore," he saw Susanna's eyes and added: "Not a very sick man, of course, but a permanently sick man, and I am of very little use to any one,—even a loved sister—"

"And does she love you as you love her?" Susanna asked more gently.

"She is very good to me; she's very sorry for me; pity is—"

"And why is she sorry for you?"

He hesitated a moment. "She knew how fond I was of her, and when she married I was very ill. And she is fond of me, because otherwise she would not grant me the privilege of devotion, would she? . . . Devotion would otherwise be an insufferable oppression, would it not? Indeed, she needs my devotion, she depends on it just because—" He had lost the thread of his pleading, he looked at Susanna a little helplessly; she remained silent, waiting, intent. "So you see, Mrs. Moore, how you will hurt us all—break us all, if any one of us were to become disloyal." His eyes were unhappy, anxious; his forehead in deep wrinkles, and his so touchingly sweet and boyish mouth was drawn with pain. He looked at Susanna as though he were about to receive hard punishment for some crime he had committed.

Susanna tried to think what all these evasions meant, but she could think of his distress only, and the simplicity of her own position. "I don't see at all," she finally replied, "but if you will give me three minutes I'll try to see—with my mind." She turned from him, to shut him out, towards the window. The light was dying, and the sun had set and left a flaming red horizon. "Look at the New Years' card, while I think," she said.

But she could not think, not consecutively. Only her conviction that he was very miserable and very disturbed deepened. And it came to her suddenly that lurking in this complication somewhere was the thing men called love,—not brotherly devotion, but the selfish passion of love; and that nevertheless he, who was being confusing and evasive, was incapable of falsehood about himself. She felt this with perfect and sweet certainty.

Love Days

But he would have to more explicit, no matter how distressed he was. She turned to him again in a moment. "It's like this: I don't see how I should in any case wound her nor him, who are little or nothing to one another. Don't you see that I should not be able to see the importance of the final rupture of a broken tie in comparison to my sacrifice,—if I cared for him?" He nodded despairingly. "I do not see. And if I pretend to see, it will not be for her sake, because I don't—I don't believe in her—not in the least, in spite of what you have said—not in any way—; on the contrary. Nor for his sake, because I shall be forsaking him and leaving him to her, in whom I don't believe, as I say again. But it will be because I want to believe in you." Her voice went soft, and her eyes opened to his like stars. "I want so terribly to believe in you, and that is why you must tell me something, something which perhaps I have a right to know since you ask of me what you ask of me—, but which I want to know because I want to believe in you." He had his hand on his chest still, his eyes and lips were stricken. "You must tell me not as man to woman, but as one being, who interferes in the fate of another, without giving reasons to that other: have you been her lover?"

Hugh was galvanized into assertive life. "Have I been her lover—Daisy's lover!" he asked as though he had not heard right. "God, no: how can you ask such a thing!" He looked at her sternly— But Susanna did not care how he looked; a great suffocating horror had been lifted; she believed him.

"And are you in love with her with the love that—but no," she cried, "don't answer me; it does not concern me; it's your affair." Hugh had dropped his head on his hand, his tired head on his strong hand that looked as though it belonged to some other body, and Susanna melted with compassion. "Dr. Hugh, please don't—don't look so beaten, because you've won out, you know. Please look as pleased as you looked displeased before. . . . Take him, and her; take all of them." She instinctively assumed her most childish tone. "I'll retire definitely—on one condition." He raised his head, distrustfully, worried to death. "After all you must assume a little responsibility about me, since you've vanquished me, and reduced me like this to— After all, I too am some one, a poor some one, needing a friend— After all, I can't give up everything, can I, now, and be stripped of all, just be-

Susanna Moore's

cause you love her, and no one loves me. . . . Well, the condition is that you shall take care of me, and come to see me every day, and—and try to amuse me—”

“Amuse you?” he said wonderingly, “after what has happened, and has here been said.”

“But nothing very dreadful has happened—not to me,” Susanna laughed.

He stared at her in astonishment. “I haven’t hurt you, you don’t care for him, then, in that way?”

“In what way.”

He hated to say it. “In the being-in-love way.”

“I don’t believe in love, my dear Doctor, or I should never have thought of Baron John at all. But if I did believe in love and felt it for him,—not even your entirely unconvincing arguments could have influenced me in the least!” She laughed. “You, Doctor Hugh, would be sitting here, an angry victim, instead of a dejected victor bound hand and foot to your victim.” She bent toward him: “For you are; you are; and I won’t release you! . . . Let’s forget them for a time, let’s. . . . But I want you to know that I think well of him, though I’m tired of him as a subject of conversation. I understand him better than you do. But they are yours; I will not even talk of them any more. . . . They are completely yours, and you have paid for them by henceforth being responsible not only for them, but for me as well.” She laughed into his face that was, as it were, hypnotically absorbed by her.

“Let’s have tea, shall we? Mrs. Collins must think you are performing an autopsy on me after killing me, and she has so much confidence in you that she won’t interfere.” Susanna giggled a little, and bent to him again: “But you haven’t, really; and I have too,” she said cryptically, and laughed some more, and called loudly for Mrs. Collins. Hugh sat still because he was too dazed to move.

Mrs. Collins entered. “Well,” she said, “this has evidently been a social call,” and lit the lights.

“Extremely so,” Susanna laughed gaily. “And now, the Doctor being too exhausted to do anything but acquiesce, let’s have tea, the three of us, Mrs. Collins; I can ring for Jeanne.”

But Mrs. Collins thought she would attend to it herself, and

Love Days

after a few cheerful observations, she hustled out of the room again to do so.

Susanna bent to Hugh again: "Please, please smile again; please, please be friends."

He took her hand impulsively, "I—" he began, and stopped short, and laid her hand to his cheek and against his mouth, and put it gently back on the coverlet, and dropped his head back on his hand.

Susanna lay back on the pillows. She felt very happy.—There was for some moments an unbroken silence. There was now nothing between them, she thought, but this transparent, beautiful silence; he was there, here, thinking of her, filled with thought of her, and she was here palpitating with a sweet consciousness of him; and she felt happy and she knew it. Oh, that this moment might live on.

When Jeanne came to fix the tea-table Susanna moved the lamp so that Hugh's face was shaded and hers in the full glare of the light, for she wished him to see how happy she was. And she kept up a stream of small talk, for she wished to divert him, divert him from the fear that he had made her suffer.

Mrs. Collins and tea having arrived, Mrs. Collins took up the burden of providing conversation. Hugh was bullied by her into eating something; his desire for tea seemed to need no stimulation. Mrs. Collins, thought Susanna, ought to look after nervous cases; she was really a marvel. No evil thoughts could thrive in the same air with her—no thoughts at all, in fact. She withered them, as poisoned gas withered vermin. Yes, she was a good creature; she had left them alone together for an hour or more, without even opening the door to investigate,—as far as was apparent. And she was right about Hugh, as far as she went, though she went no further than his health. That, at least, she knew something about; and here she was, again, on her professional subject. "So Mrs. Moore," she was saying, "isn't going to let you examine her, Doctor?"

"I don't know," he said uncomfortably.

"Well, if you do," said Susanna, "it ought to be with Dr. Guyau's co-operation; it's the only proper way. And besides, you then can poke around together, and stick your heads together in the corner, and advance together to my bed, and look important together, and give your verdict together, and send your

Susanna Moore's

bill together and be mistaken together." Hugh smiled at last. "But," she continued, "I don't see any object in it, because Dr. Guyau would pay the subsequent visits anyway. I'll get up tomorrow, and hold levees in the salon, and you can get away while the Baroness plays bridge and pay me those agreed upon respects."

"Oh dearie me, there's a box of flowers in the salon I forgot all about," cried Mrs. Collins; "they came an hour ago by special messenger."

"May I not fetch them?" Hugh tried to forestall her, but she got away first, and brought the large box to Susanna's bed.

Susanna opened it—: a dozen beautiful red roses; a smaller, stunted but fragrant sister to the American beauty rose. "Almost an American beauty," Susanna cried, enchanted. "How delicious!" She pulled out the envelope: John, of course. Hugh must have seen the writing since he was standing at the foot of the bed. "Baron John," she said, and tossed the note aside, unopened. "Jeanne must put them in water at once." But Jeanne was at tea: Mrs. Collins volunteered.

They were again alone.

Hugh stood at the foot of the bed, looking at Susanna, fascinated, unhappy; his inscrutable serenity was gone.

She smiled at him. "The poor roses are innocent."

"I feel so like a culprit," he said; "so very unhappy over everything."

"Come over here to me," she begged softly; "you have such an unfair advantage standing above me professionally—"

He came to the side of the bed, and stood above her, tall and helpless.

"Come down to me now," she begged, laughing sweetly.

He dropped on his knee without self-consciousness—almost without consciousness at all.

Susanna took his hand. "You haven't made me unhappy at all; do I look unhappy?" She looked radiant. He peered anxiously at her. "You will not admit it, but you see that I don't look unhappy; that I look happy. You won't admit it because you don't see why you haven't made me unhappy. But I know," she teased him. "I know, and I won't tell you. I'm going to sophisticate you so that you will find out for yourself. And you will have to

Love Days

listen and learn, for you are bound to me, you know.— Do you hear?”

His lips smiled again in response to the curling, sweet smiles of this girl, and the blunted edge of her glance that seemed to flatten out on his eyes, and rest there. Yet his eyes remained unseeing, with a shade of hopelessness. “It seems too good to be true . . . you seem too wonderful to be real.”

“Don’t say things like that,” she chided as he rose. “I’m not wonderful, and I won’t have you or any one thinking so; you’re not used to much—that’s all. Are you coming tomorrow; are you going to have an hour off for me?”

“I’m coming.”

“Don’t come as a matter of duty; come if you want to: I shall feel the difference.”

“Then it’s all right.”

“So the Baron has gone off to England, I’m told.” Mrs. Collins entered with the roses. “And is he returning here?” Her tone was one of great satisfaction.

“Oh, rather!” Hugh said, “day before Christmas; and day after Christmas I’m off.”

Susanna bit her lips. Mrs. Collins asked cheerily: “Back to England?”

“No, I expect it will be the mountains somewhere for a week or two. Bernese or Engadine. I have a craving for the mountains; I love them. Do you?” He turned suddenly to Susanna.

“Yes,” Susanna lied.

“It would be far better for her in the mountains; I don’t like this climate here on the lake at all; I am surprised that Dr. Devereux recommended it,” he addressed himself to Mrs. Collins.

“He didn’t,” Mrs. Collins informed. “He advised Mürren or St. Moritz.”

Hugh turned to Susanna.

“So he did,” she said, “but I hadn’t the courage to be tête-à-tête with the mountains; they’re so overwhelming—or do you think them consoling?” for it had come to her in a flash that certainly he did.

“Yes, that’s just it: they’re consoling.” He took her hand, and looked into her eyes. “Good-bye.”

Susanna Moore's

"Good-bye. Please smile."

"Tomorrow," he said.

Susanna got up after he was gone, and behaved generally as though it was nine o'clock in the morning instead of six o'clock in the afternoon. She made an elaborate toilet, dressed, had the fire lit, read the morning papers, ordered dinner, ate it, wrote some belated Christmas postals, took up a book of poems, read some of it, discussed clothes, food, and books with Mrs. Collins who knew nothing that wasn't erroneous about any of them, and went to bed at eleven o'clock, in less than ten minutes.

When she was alone, and in the dark silence, the life of her mind quickened and bloomed as she had hoped and believed it would. She was enclosed as in a sphere which contained nothing but him, and contained of him nothing that did not terminate within the curves of the sphere, recoiling towards her in their self-containing fullness. She neither inferred nor deduced, nor even speculated or divined; she re-lived him with a reference to himself only,—his words, his gestures, his movements, and the spirit that informed them, and he made her so happy that she wept.

She fell asleep with the fragrance of violets and the pearling music of a brook in her senses, and her arms about the rocky soil of its bank, on which she conceived herself to be extended in a painful longing to enter into it.

IT was Christmas day.— The sun had just set, blood-red, and flaming with liquid fire; along the horizon clouds of moulten gold with grey backs floated in the turquoise ethery air like monstrous fantastic birds, grey-feathered with soft flaming bellies.

Susanna viewed this spectacle from her chair by the hearth;— a new chair at a new hearth in a new hotel in a new landscape—the landscape he loved and she didn't. For below the flaming sky there was a distant mountain chain, blue in the dying light, and to the right and the left, beyond her view, but close by, there stood the great implacable screens of these skies—: the snow-capped mountains.

Susanna sat by her newly rented hearth and waited.— She no longer watched the changing skies; she did not wish to see the gold and orange fade, the graceful bird-clouds stretch out grotesquely, lose their glory and turn drab and ragged. . . . She wished to dwell on the permanent, not on the changing.— Perhaps, she thought, that was why he found the mountains consoling, because they held the maximum of permanency in this world of flux, they and the stars, the beautiful, remote, untouchable stars that shone for every one, not only for tourists.— Yet she was ready to love the mountains—together with him.

She looked about the room.— Where would he sit when he came? If he left the Lake tomorrow morning, as he had intended, he might reach here in time for luncheon, or immediately after. Would he come here, or would he go to the St. Moritz, preferring to be alone, and only sleigh over here to see her? . . . She had come here only because she had felt that it would be his choice to be here where it was quiet, here in the shadow of these dreadful mountains. . . . That he would come, come near enough to visit her daily, she had not doubted. She had seen and felt that she meant something quite special to him: she had felt it in their long hours together at the Lake while Agatha bridged; he had seemed to be in perfect accord with her own mood, and her mood was one of exquisite happiness.

Love Days

She had left the Lake in the morning—yesterday morning—, while he was out with Agatha. She had sworn her companions to secrecy and had got ready in a great hurry. She had written to him, telling him her destination and asking him to make it his for a few days,—it or its neighbourhood. This morning she had sent him a telegram “Merry Christmas, please come. Susanna.”

And she had thought of him more or less constantly. Less dreamily now, more realistically, since seeing him was no longer a constant possibility and a daily certainty. . . . At times she thought of him with silly fears and fantastic inventions. He might, for instance, be ill. Or the Baroness might be ill. Or Rettigheim might not return when he intended. Or they might want to come here with him,—there was little he could refuse his Daisy. . . . But somehow, although she was disturbed by these reflections, she was not now deeply disturbed: they did not reach the depths of her sensitiveness.

What a strange Christmas, she thought, as she sat and watched the hearthfire which she was herself tending, since she had urged Jeanne to go to the celebration in the servants’ hall begun last night and still continuing on its lengthy way; and since Mrs. Collins, God be praised, had found some good friends here, who had included her in their festivities. God be praised, for she had had severe qualms about uprooting Mrs. Collins the very day before Christmas, qualms she partially quieted by thinking of the expedient of permitting Mrs. Collins prematurely, by the accident of packing, to glimpse the handsome jewel which was to be her Christmas gift, and which was, at this moment, adorning her bosom. As for Jeanne, Jeanne was a philosopher, and “*les étrangers*” were “*les étrangers*,” here or there.

So Susanna sat in the dark room at the dying fire, thinking that her Christmas day was not so much like a day as like a portion of time travelling to become tomorrow.

Such silence. . . . Yet in this dry, thin air one could hear sounds for miles about when there were any to hear. . . . Every cart that passed on the highroad, every boy who whistled. If she opened the window she would hear the swollen green river half a mile away rushing the water of the glaciers down to the valleys.—Was then every one still celebrating sentimentally, quietly? . . .

The air up here was indeed wonderful, she thought;—already

Susanna Moore's

she felt much improved. But even before she left the Lake she was improved: her appetite had returned, and she had slept so well, that she even slept during the day when there was nothing to stay awake for. . . . And if she felt well, he would too . . . especially if there was no Daisy to make him sit up nights, while she exhibited him as her lover or her slave, according to the tastes of her public. Susanna tried to remember what was done to punish the desecrators of the shrines and statues of the deity;—whatever it was ought to be done to her,—to this horrible, monstrous woman.

And Johannes, would he try to see her again? . . . She thought not. She had made an effort, and had indited a note, in which she had told him in more amiable words that her mood had "umgeschlagen"; that it never could be recaptured; and that all that remained in her spirit of their moment of "rapprochement" was the taste of contact with fresh and untapped strength, and a sense of admiration for him,—feelings that would be abiding memories.—But her mood had passed so completely, that their episode seemed now so madly unreal to her that it was difficult even to recall it, and him. . . . And she hoped that he would not answer; for she did not wish to remember him.

In fact, she thought of these people and these incidents only because they were connected with him, with Hugh. She thought little of anything unlinked with him, because the past had a way of connecting itself, not with the present, but with the future. Futures were dangerous things, she had learned; and since this one coming along now was happily vague, and did not force itself upon her beyond the limits of tomorrow or the day after, why should she let it shadow and obscure the extraordinary wonder of the present? . . .

She closed her eyes and thought of their last hour together, in the sleigh, when she sat between him and Mrs. Collins. He had been so gay, and boyish, and happy, yes, happy. Until she had taken his hand in hers, under the cover, and had stroked it in her need to give expression to the happiness she felt through him. He had then suddenly become quite silent, and the light had died from his eyes and left them hopeless, and his touching mouth had closed into something very like a wound, she had thought, with a tightening of her heart. So she had deliberately released his hand

Love Days

with a childish: All right, stuck-up Albion . . . and he had laughed his pearling laugh; and after a while he had taken her hand in his, whispering: For amicable relations with the States; and had retained it, while he talked again and was gay again,—and happy.

Susanna smiled as she relived these moments; smiled a little as he had smiled, with infinite tenderness.

After a time her staff tramped back, singly, but simultaneously. At any rate it seemed like a whole staff, so much light did it make, so much had it to say, rendered informal by the spirit of Christmas. Jeanne came back adorned with Christmas-tree balls hung on her ears, charmingly fantastic in her young dark beauty; Mrs. Collins' bosom was resplendent not only with Susanna's gift, but with holly and mistletoe tied with golden bows. And both had brought Susanna gifts, things they had themselves received. Jeanne, a box of cakes, made by the pastry chef himself, and presented to her by him after a view of her in combination with the Christmas-tree balls; Mrs. Collins, a hideous pincushion of coffee-coloured denim embroidered with pink roses and a blue and yellow butterfly. "It's quaintly pretty, isn't it?" went with this presentation.

"Oh, lovely," Susanna replied, eating a cake. "One tastes like the other looks."

"Ah, Madame, vraiment?" Jeanne, who understood, cried, "mais je n'y comprends rien—je les ai goûtés, cependant—"

Susanna winked at her, and she tactfully broke off.

After things had quieted down, Mrs. Collins spent a great deal of her energy, cheerfully, in the attempt to persuade Susanna to go down to the restaurant to dinner,—but in vain. She then announced her unalterable decision to dine upstairs with Susanna; a decision Susanna made the best of, graciously. She was, she said, going to bed early, and Mrs. Collins could then return to her friends, if she wished.

The remainder of the afternoon passed quietly, and dinner was accompanied by Mrs. Collins' pleasant chatter. After Christmas, which had turned out so nicely for her, had been exhausted as a subject of conversation, she said: "I wonder now, whether Dr. Whittleby will be coming this way?"

"I wonder," Susanna said. "I hope so; I wrote him we were

Susanna Moore's

coming here; it would be so nice for us to have him here, but perhaps he will want to be alone after his family debauch."

"I shouldn't wonder," Mrs. Collins agreed dryly, "with such a family! It's odd," she pursued. "I'm of English stock myself, but I can't tolerate these—"

"But Dr. Hugh is an Englishman."

"I was thinking of the women," she said.

"But they are not all like her,—far from it. And the admirable ones are the most admirable women—" and so forth, and so on, for a time.

"Perhaps Dr. Whittleby will go back to where he took his cure years ago," and Mrs. Collins had returned to the subject.

"Where was that?" Susanna asked with a heart that stood still.

"I don't know, I never asked him; most likely Davos."

Davos,—where her father had died, where her mother had watched him die—"My father died there;—don't let's talk about health, Mrs. Collins." She covered her eyes with her hand to keep out some dreadful light that was threatening to arise.

Mrs. Collins thought she was crying, and rose and hung over her, patting her kindly. "No," she said gently, "we ought not to talk sickness, and we don't need to. You're doing so well, you'll be sending me about my business soon. And these days, my dear, conditions have changed so, and sickness is so much better understood,—your father would almost surely have been cured, if he had had the benefit of present-day treatment. You heard Dr. Whittleby and myself talking the other night; he's a great optimist, and he has a right to his opinion, with his large practice."

Susanna pulled herself together.— Mrs. Collins was no sentimentalist; she did not mince matters. Optimist—large practice—present-day treatment— She might, to be sure, ask her right out what she thought his condition really was, but how should she, after all, know; and if she guessed, and guessed wrong— No, she could not ask her; she could not. She would ask *him*. He had said: "not very ill, of course, but permanently." It had burnt itself into her memory as had every word he uttered. She would simply ask him what he meant. . . . As for herself, she felt so well that she had not let him examine her; and Dr. Guyau had made all the various tests, and had reported to Dr. Devereux that nothing was wrong. And now she felt so well,—as though in a week she would be herself again—if he came soon.

Love Days

After dinner she borrowed Jeanne's Bible, and began to read the Song of Songs. It sounded very strange in French, like Mallarmé or Rimbaud or—well, anyway not like the Song of Songs; and with the most willing co-operation of the will it did not suggest him, Hugh. Smiling, Susanna closed the book, and delved into her mind, trying to recall other poems of love. She wondered whether poets actually composed them while in love. . . . Perhaps men could do such things. . . . She had written some herself: it now seemed years ago.—How funny! She wondered what was in them, and laughed.

She thought she might now go to bed: it was nine o'clock.—

She went to bed; and Jeanne extinguished the lights at half past nine, and opened the window on a crack, for it was a crisp cold night.

Being in bed was not so pleasant tonight, Susanna found.—

He had not even telegraphed, let alone written. . . . Although, as it was Sunday, she would not in any case have received his letter. . . . What was she saying! It was not Sunday, it was Saturday. It seemed a week since Thursday, since they drove together. What if that had been the last time she would ever see him? . . . Well, it wouldn't be, that was all; not unless she died suddenly. . . .

She tossed her blanket about to divert her thoughts, but they refused. What if he were ill . . . Davos . . . her father— And suddenly all, all the black intimations of before returned, the more robust for their temporary absence.

If only she had remained where he was; where she could have seen that he was all right, even though he had been unable to give her more than a few hours, or a few minutes, of Agatha's time. And then, when he left, she could simply have followed him. . . .

If she had stayed, she would be sleeping peacefully, enveloped in his fragrance. . . .

But now it seemed that she was not going to sleep at all tonight. Well, then not; what of it! And she gave up all idea of sleeping, and resolved to meet her questioning mind with wide-awake attention, and when it formulated a worried question to formulate a sensible answer.— The resolution alone brought relief, and she

Susanna Moore's

lay wide-awake, but quiet; highly conscious of the moment, and waiting; waiting for the morning.

She began to hear the noises of the night. She heard a dog bark, probably a shepherd dog, or a watch dog from some chalet on the hill-side; and an answering distant bark of another tone. She heard the snow crunching on the highroad under the returning foot-steps of a pedestrian,—happy, careless, inconsiderate foot-steps: a reveller, perhaps. She heard a window open, a man's voice humming for a moment something home-made, improvised, and the window again banged to: a happy, inconsiderate bang.

Then she heard the church bell strike twelve. . . . Very loudly for twelve, she thought,—for mysterious midnight in the shadow of the cruel mountains.

And for a long time there was silence . . . but for the thin crackling of the wood of her room in the cold air, like tiny explosions.

And again silence. . . .

And then a distant rumbling, increasing slowly, and then coming nearer along the highroad, and nearer; and louder and louder; until it dissolved itself into the clatter of hoofs, the crunching of wheels and the creaking of unoiled ancient parts of machinery, and it was easily perceptible that the din was the auricular accompaniment of the hotel bus.

Susanna's heart gave a sudden leap, and fell back, and left a sickening excitement in its place.

The bus was stopping below at the entrance.

She jumped out of bed, and pulled the window open, and peered down through the dark space.— She saw a suitcase taken out, and then a man descend. She couldn't see him, make him out, but she must take a chance. "Hugh," she called down.

He stood still, took off his hat, put his hand to his brow, and gazing up vaguely, answered "Susanna!"

"Merry Christmas," she stage-whispered.

"Merry Christmas," he answered.

"Au revoir, Hugh, and welcome!" she called.

"Au revoir," he whispered back, "Susanna, and thank you."

Susanna went back to bed and lay on her breast, embracing her pillow. Her tears wet it, but she was unconscious of this, for soon her deep breaths of content had sent her to sleep.

WHEN Susanna awakened late in the morning, the sun was high in the heavens, shining brilliantly. Susanna awakened with the knowledge that something marvelous and perfectly right had happened and was happening,—something that encompassed her so completely, that nothing else really existed.

Yet she breakfasted and read her Christmas mail from home with calm satisfaction; everything seemed to have slid back into its correct position, pleasantly, the position it had occupied when—well, before she left home. Only, everything seemed infinitely remote.

She read her friends' letters and took an interest in their news; she pictured and felt what they related, but she felt it as one feels the events in a book,—objectively sympathetic, since one can do nothing about them.

She smiled a great deal over everything; Mrs. Collins late in the morning, gave her the news of Dr. Whittleby's arrival and was puzzled by its smiling and unastonished reception.

Mrs. Collins was indeed obviously puzzled by the whole situation, and among all its puzzling features the fact that Susanna had departed from the Lake without even waiting for the return of that dangerous Baron was the one which most of all puzzled and impressed her.

For in the slumbering depths of Mrs. Collins subconsciousness, unknown to Susanna, the conviction that the Baron was dangerous lay firmly imbedded, together with sister appreciations involving the Baron's fine virility and handsome upstanding maleness. Whereas in the upper regions of her consciousness, better known to Susanna, and quite unassociated with those in which the Baron's dangerousness led its subterranean life, was her respectful pity for this sick young Dr. Whittleby, this dear sick young Doctor, this poor dear sick young Doctor. And so, although Susanna had left the danger zone a little unaccountably for the Susanna Mrs. Collins thought to know, and had a little unaccountably been followed by this poor young invalid, the power of Mrs. Collins'

Love Days

lower strata of consciousness and their lack of relation to her upper strata manifested in itself in the fact that Susanna and Hugh were allowed to sleigh alone on their first afternoon,—when afternoon slowly but sweetly advanced into the state of being present.

They drove along the frozen highway in the crisp sunny air; there was no sound but the continuous jingling of the sleigh bells and the occasional crunching and cracking of the hard snow;—good things, Susanna thought; but for them the beating of her heart might be the only sound—horribly—

The driver turned around and asked in his Engadine Italian where he was to drive them to; Susanna managed to understand, and they debated the question;—since Susanna objected to the Meierei and similarly suitable places, he agreed to take them to a little inn some miles down the river.

Hugh commented on her knowledge of languages;—John had remarked on her knowledge of German. Susanna told him of her student term in Berlin; their talk for some time was of universities, methods and men. She had really wanted to study at Oxford, she said. Would she have met him there? she asked breathlessly. No; he had been at Cambridge, working in zoology and geology; he had hesitated between the two as his life-work. The incidental excursions and voyages of exploration appealed greatly to him. On the eve of accompanying his Professor to South America, he was taken ill and had to come here to Switzerland instead. For two years . . . Davos. He hurried over this phase.— On his return to England he had decided to devote himself to medicine. He studied, he said briefly; he was now practising.

“So I was at Cambridge long before you were in Berlin,” he ended, with a smile into her face raised to his with shining blind eyes fixed on his.

“Not so long,” she said, “only two or three years—I’m twenty-seven.”— She wondered why she added a year to her age—“You can’t be so much more than that.”

“I’m not; I’m twenty-eight, I’ll be twenty-nine next month.— You look twenty-one, hardly that. Only on the day we met, in your gold gown you looked older. You looked quite terrifyingly grown-up and wise and—as though you knew millions of things

Susanna Moore's

hardly suspected by the rest of us. . . . You looked a little like one of the fates come to earth in the guise of a beautiful woman; —one of the fates," he repeated, staring at nothing.

"You were going to say 'fairy.'"

"I remembered in time not to, you must give me credit for that."

"Good or bad fairy,—which is it going to be, Hugh?" she asked breathlessly, looking nevertheless a little as he had just described her.

"Susanna," he replied in his incredibly gentle and sweet voice, "only good, and a fairy, if you don't mind, one who with a wave of her wand turns everything to glittering beauty; transfigures one's drab world—as long as one remains a child."

"I don't know what that means, Hugh; but on the day we met I *was* old. . . . I didn't believe in anything . . . I didn't believe in you . . . I didn't believe anything so wonderful as you could be."

Susanna's eyes, tragic with intense feeling, saw Hugh's withdraw from her, tragic with pain. "Don't chaff me like that, Susanna; chaff me by ragging me or patronizing me,—I love it, —but don't tease me in this way, I don't think I can quite bear it."

Susanna withdrew her eyes from him with an effort and stared ahead into space: "I am not teasing you," she said slowly and as though in a tranced state. "I said what I said teasingly because I said it with a bad conscience . . . you see I'm saying it because I have to say it . . . because my heart won't hold it . . . because my heart is weak . . . because I abused it without knowing, and when I knew and reclaimed it, it came back weak. . . . It no longer holds what it holds stoutly, as it ought to, for you, Hugh, for you; containing what it contains stoutly, and leaving me free to think how to make you open it, for yourself, at your pleasure . . . I can't think—not of anything—I'm at its mercy—my overflowing heart—I'm at your mercy—and I'm displeasing you whom I want to please—whom I—Hugh," she murmured, turning upon him, "Hugh my—" and seeing his face contorted with pain, she did not say it—say "love"—, she substituted "friend." It had a hollow, an almost ominous sound.

"Susanna," he murmured brokenly, "you confound my reason.

Love Days

I am no longer myself. I do not follow my duty. I do not see my duty—I shall perish in this see-saw between happiness and misery—” He turned his head from her, and covered his eyes with his hand.

Susanna’s heart stood still, but her eyes saw his extremity, the extremity of his pain, and the perception shot into her heart and restored it.

“My heart may be weak, but my mind is strong; there is no reason why you shouldn’t tell me what it is that makes you miserable, Hugh.” She spoke very gently.

He stared ahead in stony pain.

“Is it because of me,” she said, “because I love you?”

“Susanna,” he cried brokenly, and put his hand to his heart.

“Is it because—” but she could not say this either: this “because you love me”; she could not thus violate his heart. “Is it because you are ill?” she pursued.

He nodded slowly, breathing deeply.

“I know you are ill—ill with consumption,” she went on, and noticed with eyes full of concern that he straightened up a little as though a burden had at least been lightened.

“I know that you are permanently ill—,” and she saw the tension of his touching mouth relax.

“I know that you have to live in your English hills in isolation;” she laid her hand on his.

“I know that you find consolation in the good you do to others afflicted like yourself.” His eyes shone with wondering enchantment, and his mouth trembled.

“And also in the view of these cruel mountains,” she waved her hand toward them, smiling bravely.

“And in your devotion to those you love—your cousin Agatha—to whom you sacrifice yourself.” He almost smiled.

“And who desecrates you,” she ended.

“Susanna,” he murmured, shocked.— But he had thawed; yes, she had thawed him from stony pain back to enchantment and shock.

And Susanna’s eyes shone with triumph as she cried challengingly: “Yes, she commits sacrilege; she ought to be visited with the punishment meted out to desecrators of shrines—”

“Susanna!” he remonstrated again.

Susanna Moore's

"Yes," she pursued, unheeding, talking into quiet not only him, but her own wounded heart, "Sacrilegium originally meant theft of holy things; did you know that?"

"No," he answered, beguiled.

"Well it did; and after that it meant insult or injury to the idea of a sacred thing, not only to the thing itself. You know the nature of the dire punishments attached to it: torture, death, deportation. Deportation is what I should prefer for her—to some country where there live only bridge and tennis and golf players, and skaters and flirts,—sportspeople, in short . . . where every one else is excluded, especially people in poor health, like ourselves." She squeezed his hand in comradeship: never had she felt so completely the lack of charm of this caress.

"Is there anything I don't know about you, Hugh?" She turned to him, again horribly oppressed. "Since I know so much, you ought to tell me the rest, you know. . . ."

"Yes," he said gravely but calmly, "about Daisy."

"Oh," Susanna murmured rejectingly.

"Daisy is very unhappy. She is in love with her husband—"

"Oh," Susanna murmured again.

"So you must not think this way about her Susanna; that cruelty at least is not necessary." He peered appealingly into Susanna's eyes.

Susanna's eyes were starry and startled with insight: it had flashed through her in a moment how it was.

"And she plays you off to John as her unhappy and unsuccessful lover," she shot at Hugh, thinking only of the revelation. "And you say that I am unjust and cruel— Hugh!"

He hung his head.

"Hugh!" she repeated wonderingly and a little sternly.

"But she thinks I'm in love with her, do you see; she always has been convinced of it—it's an old established conviction because I've been so fond of her. . . . She's not false, don't believe that, Susanna, please; she's an unhappy woman using the weapons at hand to help her fight for her husband's love."

Susanna looked at him, so credulous, so appealing, and she closed her mouth on what she wished to say. What difference did it make after all whether he believed in her or pitied her,

Love Days

since he did not love her, and never had. It was not this that brought the tragic pain into his eyes. . . .

"Well," she answered lightly, "what is it the Bible says of a jealous woman?"

"I don't know. Does it say anything; it says much," he rejoined absently.

"I seem to remember something unpleasant vaguely— If you were John now I should quote to your linguistic delight: *Die Eifersucht ist eine Leidenschaft die mit Eifer sucht was leiden macht.*" Susanna felt all adrift, floating;—how would this ever end, how would it ever go on, how was this indefiniteness to be borne. . . .

"By the way," he observed, "I suppose I ought to tell you that John was considerably upset when he found you gone. He—he made it clear to me when we were alone." Hugh reddened.

Susanna laughed a little. "You certainly ought not to tell me, and he certainly should not have told you how badly I behaved—"

"He told me nothing but how he missed you—and—he told me nothing I could not believe—"

"I shall tell you some day, St. Hugh, and get absolution; if I remember it and him—it seems so unreal and stupid already," Susanna said gently.

"Am I such a prig?" Hugh asked with a momentarily untroubled smile.

"I hope not," Susanna drawled slowly and softly. "It would be too dreadful to have fallen in love with a prig."

"Oh Susanna," he murmured, smiling still, "what a tease you are, what an incorrigible tease."

Susanna lay back for a moment as though stricken; and then her eyes blazed. Wait, they were saying, wait until we get away from this dingle-dangle of the bells and this running along of these frightful bluish mountains, and see whether I shall accept this from you— Even now. . . .

But Hugh was looking ahead, his mouth restored to its so touching sweetness, his tired deep eyes alone perplexed, her hand in his.

"Isn't it silent," Susanna murmured, "one feels Sunday in the very air; sun and silence. . . ."

They subsided into silence themselves, and Susanna tried to nourish her famishing heart in drinking in his deepening content.

Susanna Moore's

They reached the inn, a small white-washed house, mostly walls, flung down between the highroad and the rushing green glacial river. It served the natives and hence was placed without a thought for the æsthetic sensibilities of tourists, and was appointed with a similar lack of interest. Its tiny windows were neither for view nor air, only for curtains.

Susanna looked out of one of them while the innkeeper took Hugh's order, felt the iron stove to see whether it was hot enough, and remarked that the Signor and Signora would be undisturbed, and left the room,—Susanna looked out, and thought the rushing graceless river and the great wall of snow and firs climbing up in the dark shade to heights beyond her vision the gloomiest view she had ever beheld. Turning from it to the stuffy little low room with its red-tableclothed table, its hard black sofa, its white walls and iron stove and Hugh standing in front of it as though it were a hearth, was like turning to a safe paradise.

"The heat feels good; come and have some, do;" he said, making room for her.

She stood beside him; her eyes glittered.

"You are quiet, Susanna."

"I'm thinking," she replied, "I've been thinking. . . . You have introduced me to your affairs; I wish to do the same, if you don't mind. Just the facts," she hurried on. "Dr. Devereux is arranging a divorce for me in Paris. I shall have it in May or June. I was married for six months to Grodz, Pol Grodz, the painter. I suppose Mrs. Collins told you all this."

"Yes," he said.

"I suppose we thought we were in love, but we were not;—it seems very fantastic now— I was about to run away, when mercifully I fell ill, and Dr. Devereux took the matter out of my hands. The rest I will tell you some other time."

"Don't worry about it, Susanna," Hugh said compassionately. "We sometimes cannot help being cruel to those we love," his voice wavered; "fate sometimes ordains it."

Susanna wheeled about in front of him. "What are you saying?" she cried. "Hugh, my— you cannot believe that I loved him; I told you that I did not love him. What can you mean? I was not cruel either; he is a great artist and he loves life hotly;— the whole more than any of its manifestations. And he was not cruel; if there was any cruelty it was destiny's; my destiny that

Love Days

blinded me with darkness, and now when I see the light, is blinding me with light, so that I grope and grope,—to find you, to touch you— I've told you all this," she added, as she put her hands against his breast and brought her eyes, full of the light she had spoken of, to him, "because I love you so unspeakably."

Hugh placed his hands on hers and bent his head over them; his face was again drawn with pain. Susanna closed her eyes; it seemed to her that at last, at last she must receive the balm of acceptance—

There was a rap at the door. Susanna sprang away and sank down on the sofa.— Was there then to be no more dignity, no more peace in her life, she asked herself, sick with frustration, and vaguely recalling the comings and goings of these last days:—Jeanne and the Baron and Mrs. Collins, in and out, in and out, spoiling her very movement—the movement of her soul. And now this man with these rattling ugly things. And Hugh standing on the same spot, like one petrified.

The man left, wishing them a good appetite.

"Come here to me, Hugh," Susanna begged, as he continued to give no sign of life.

He slowly came to her, as in a dream; his face was drawn and pale with pain.

She motioned to him to sit beside her. He sat down beside her and stared at her as though in a dream. She stared back at him with eyes that were a little wild and softened gradually to the brink of tears as she looked and looked at him, as though she could never be satisfied.

"I don't expect you to love me as I love you," she began, at last;—her voice was soft and low like an indrawn breath; "I love you with a bruised heart, a sick heart that you are healing; I love you as one loves a saviour; as one loves one's last hope of salvation; as the famished love. I don't expect you to love me as I love you, why should you indeed;—but if you could love me a little, enough to let me love you so completely;—if you could give me some divine assurance——oh, Hugh—Hugh—" Her face, almost as white as her gown, fell against the stiff sofa like a wilted flower.

He gathered himself together. "Susanna . . . Susanna . . . you may speak to me beautifully and freely of your love, like

Susanna Moore's

this, because it is a splendid love; because you have everything, everything to give . . . While I have nothing . . . less than a beggar. Don't you understand, my dear and sweet Susanna, that I am nothing but a poor sick man, who has gone through life hand and hand with renunciation until I have nothing to call my own but her spirit, and the strength of her habitual presence. Susanna," he took her hands in his, "Susanna, Susanna, loving you from the moment I saw you was a sweet ecstasy, because I loved you as I loved the creatures of my imagination before you,—in my fantastic, hopeless, shabby way; a way that cannot, at least, be disappointed since it expects nothing;—I loved you thus in some splendidly magnified degree. A new beauty came with you into the world: the world suddenly became one in which the lovely creatures of the fancy of one who has no other life can actually come true.— But now Susanna, my beloved, since you say that you love me, you have become too gloriously real and I have become too dreadfully real, do you not see . . . and my hopelessness has become a great pain . . . Do you not see, my dear . . . dear . . . do you not understand that instead of loving me you should pity me?" His mouth trembled into a smile.

Susanna hung on his words and lips; she thought her heart would break. "My love, my love," she sobbed brokenly, "since you love me all is well; do not speak of pity; do not speak of hopelessness—look at me, look at me, let me look at you, for now we belong to one another; take me to you; you love me; I know it—I see it, but I want to feel it—that you long for me as I long for you, my beloved Hugh." She threw her arms around his neck, "I want not only your love—I want you—"

He gazed tragically into her passionate face, and held her off. "Susanna my child, you do not then understand that I am a sick man, that my lips—my breath—are dangerous; do you not understand that I am too sick to love; a menace to others. Susanna, Susanna my love, try to understand."

"No,"—she breathed hard, her arms still about him, and she looked hard,— "no, I do not understand. My father died of consumption in less than two years, and my mother loved him as she had always loved him, and she did not take it from him, and she was like me, only much frailer and weaker and not so strong and her hair was red— What am I saying—" Susanna looked about

Love Days

wildly—"Yes, and she died two years later of bereavement—of bereavement—not of consumption. She died because he was dead, not because he was ill, and I shan't either—I shall die because you are cruel, because you do not love me as I love you, because you withhold from me the blessing of your love—"

"Susanna, Susanna," he murmured, as they stared at one another, her arms about him, her face in his hands.

"Just this once," Susanna begged, "take me to you just this once, so that I may have something of you, something,—no matter what follows. Don't you see that I can't care, my love, whether our kiss destroys my body, if it eases my soul— You cannot want to destroy me utterly, my Hugh, can you, my cruel love—" She closed her eyes, she hardly knew what she was saying; she felt close to swooning, she felt that she wanted to swoon, that there was nothing more to live for. . . .

Hugh gathered her up in his arms and crushed her to him, and as their lips met in a long caress, a great ecstasy and a great peace came over her—as though the portals of life and of death had opened together.

When, released, she lay back against the hard sofa with eyes closed, she told herself that now was the time she should die, die of bereavement, for a fear that this had been the pinnacle of fulfilment, that this moment of perfection was the end, possessed her icily.

She opened her eyes and beheld Hugh turned from her, his head buried in his arms, leaning against the other end of the sofa. She saw his heaving back, his stricken shoulders, his bowed head; she saw the extremity of his distress. I am torturing him, she thought a little wildly, but I must, for the sake of our love.

She slid one arm under his arm raised to support his head, and she placed her hand against his chest, and with her other hand she stroked his hair gently. It gave her a divine thrill to touch him, as though the merest touch bore witness to her belonging to him utterly, and he to her—they together.

"You must not be unhappy because you have given me a moment of perfect happiness, my beloved," she whispered, "because you relented, because you weakened, because you sacrificed your strength to my need. I need you, Hugh, my love—if I am to live. I need your strength and your beauty—that have

Susanna Moore's

made the world beautiful to me already. I need the blessing of your being. I am willing to die for them as my mother died—happily. You cannot deny yourself to me since you are everything to me.” She leaned her head against his, her lips on his throat, her hand receiving the beat of his heart. She wished wildly that time would stop and leave them here like this, in this moment of peace with the promise of infinite beatitude.

But after a moment she felt Hugh straightening up, gently releasing himself from her embrace. She saw him rise, and taking her hands in his, compel her to rise. And facing him, relaxed and dissolved in her emotion, she saw in his face a degree of resolution and strength that galvanized her into immediate attention and filled her with frightful fear.

“My love,” he said, pressing her hands so that they hurt, and looking into her stricken, frightened eyes with deep sad eyes and a smile on his lips, “this is the moment we must be strong. We must; there is no other way. We are face to face with the necessity—now.— We must now—”

“But we are strong,” Susanna interrupted breathlessly. “You are strong, and I am strong,” she pursued, driven by a sickening terror lest she could not arrest him where they stood, lest he escape and leave her desolate. Anything but that—anything but his loss— “Yes, I am strong, because I not only love you, you see, my dear, but I worship you as well. Do you understand, I worship you, and anything you find right and beautiful will be right and beautiful to me. If you say that I shall not love you, I will only worship you; if you say that I may only be your friend, —nothing more—it shall be so. . . . We still can be everything to one another—we will pour ourselves into friendship, since there will be no one else; since we shall love no one else.—

“See,” she retreated to the wall opposite and stood against it leaning on her hands, “I am leaving you, and if you think it wisest that I should not come back, I will not,” her mouth trembled as she tried to smile. “No I won’t; I’ll stay wherever you put me!” She tried to laugh.—“I won’t stay here though against the wall as though lined up to be shot.” She bit her lips. “But I’ll stay in Switzerland or in Paris or in London, and just write to you—

“Or—Hugh, dear,” her voice was almost calm, gaiety danced precariously on its surface; “let’s have some tea if it isn’t too cold, and put off everything else—shall we,—yes?”

Love Days

He awakened to her voice and was beside her in a moment; he raised her hand to his heart. His eyes shone with wonder and ecstasy, she thought, as he looked at her, and his lips trembled and his voice vibrated with sweetness,—unbearably.

"It is divine pity in your heart that has made you strong, beloved Susanna," he said, "the pity in your wonderful heart. You have understood my love and my weakness, my craven weakness, and you have pitied me and it has made you strong. It shall make me strong too; to hold your hand, my beloved will give me a little of your strength and—and your splendour. You shall not be ashamed of me again, my wonderful Susanna."

He released her hand, and Susanna walked to the table silently, casting down her stricken eyes to hide them, and distorting her mouth in a false smile. He followed, and his eyes still shone with a mysterious ecstasy.

Susanna, pouring their tea, composed herself. There is always a way out of things, out of everything, she vaguely thought, as she poured and asked the necessary questions;—out of marriage, out of friendship, out of the world, if one chooses;—the exit doors are open, though the entrance doors are closed. . . .

"You are not drinking your tea; try to, dear," he begged, trying to sip his own.

"It's English Breakfast tea; I can't drink it," she offered as excuse.

"Let me order some other—what kind?" He rose.

"They surely have no other."

But he insisted; the innkeeper was called;—coffee was ordered as a compromise.

Yes . . . there was always a way out . . . But he was still here; still everything to her; only, shrouded in a painful longing, through which she could no longer penetrate— She looked at him. He was speaking; she scarcely knew of what,—something about Paris and tea. He looked younger again, with his boyish throat rising more hopefully from his low blue collar, and his beautiful mouth smiling tenderly, and his tired eyes full of a light they derived from her. Yes, from her. She felt this, and for a moment her aching heart partook of his satisfaction. She was able to listen for a moment; to make rejoinders; to steer him into the subject of Dr. Devereux.

With the attention that escaped she took in the details of the

Susanna Moore's

room; the lessening light of the gloomy window-holes, the stuffy dusky warm air, the iron stove before which he had stood like iron himself, the sofa on which she had been embraced so fleetingly and yet so eternally by this man she loved; this rough tea-table with the hard bench against the wall, on which she sat, and the stool opposite on which he sat supporting himself on his elbow, while he pretended to eat and pretended to converse. She would never forget this setting of her only hour of beatitude, already over, with only its echoes floating in her soul.

The coffee arrived. Hugh fixed a cup for her, and she let it stand.

"Dearest," he begged, "take just a drop—let me boss you a bit, just for the pleasure of it."

She drank a little, while he held the cup to her mouth.

"It's going to be desperately cold on the way back," he remarked.

"Then why don't you drink your tea," she asked in an absent and childish manner.

"Haven't I!" he exclaimed, surprised. "Well, I shall." He drank it in one draft, and with a triumphant smile resumed the business of coaxing her.

"Now you have no excuse for disobeying me, you spoiled girl," he said. "Think of all the things you have to tell me," he went on in his low even voice, while she sipped her coffee. "You've to tell me who spoiled you so outrageously, that you have a will of your own nothing short of anarchic,—to be subdued only by a shabby invalid, because in the greatness of your heart you let him—"

"Stop, Hugh," Susanna interrupted with troubled eyes, "that subject is taboo, dear,—for the present."

"Is it, should it be, do you think, Susanna, beloved?" he asked, troubled.

"Yes, Hugh," she answered with down-cast eyes. She resumed: "I've taken all of this disgusting coffee that I'm going to take, and you've taken all of the disgusting tea you thought you ought to take,—so we'd better go now while we're warm. You'd better ring for the man and order the sleigh."

He did so. "And may I not even call you beloved Susanna?" he asked with troubled eyes.

"You *must* call me beloved Susanna," she smiled at him bitterly; "or how shall I know that you love me?"

Love Days

"You know it by the beautiful pity in your heart, don't you, beloved Susanna?" He took her hand and held it tight.

"Yes." She hesitated; her voice was cold.

"And you know it when you look at me and see how you have transformed me."

She looked and she saw—she could not help seeing—that all of him, all he was and felt, was there in the light of his eyes that she had kindled.

"Yes," she said tenderly, "I know it; you may nevertheless call me beloved or whatever you please, Hugh."

"Hugh what?" he pleaded.

"Hugh, my love, my hopeless love," she said bitterly, drawing on her gloves. "Help me into my coat, please, the sleeves are tight or something."

He brought her coat and held it for her. "Susanna, dearest, you have made me so happy, I'm not prepared for anything else than happiness. . . . I couldn't bear to be miserable any more. . . . You see, you simply must go on pitying me and helping me and making me divinely happy, now that you have begun. . . . Say something wonderful to me, beloved, something that will go on shining in the dark."

He stood before her, about to button her coat; he looked at her, she looked at him;—she felt with anguish that in an embrace she might have received his whole beautiful self shining in his eyes . . . might have entered into the new beautiful world that lay beyond. . . . She gathered up her wits,—for him—for him; and with a smile of resignation and a vibrating voice she said slowly: "Hugh, my love, my happy hopeless love."

He looked deep into her eyes, touched, enchanted; and thanked her by bowing his head over her hands he again held to his breast. She kissed his hair gently, gently, that he might not perceive it.

They started for home as the sun was preparing for departure.

The performance:—the sun's reddening approach to the horizon, its flaming nearness, its blushing adieu, its golden after-glow, the silvery golden blue twilight left behind, slowly fading; the changing colour of snow and earth that poured into changing shapes,—all this continuous performance occupied the entire period of their drive home.

They spoke of it and of other impersonal matters. . . . Hugh

Susanna Moore's

spoke, and Susanna listened; and gradually a dreamy mood crept over her, calming her, and she began to hear his sweet voice with comfort, and feel his big hand around hers, and feel his strength and his control, and she gave herself up to his will, and all else was shut out.

When they reached the hotel she asked him whether he would dine with her and Mrs. Collins, in her room, at eight,—it was now past five.

"If you will have me, with pleasure, beloved and sweet Susanna," he said as they parted.

Susanna rested in bed for the intervening hours. Her body rested in a fashion, and her mind in a fashion resisted the entrance of the phalanx of considerations that clamoured for admission at its threshold. But in its defensive resistance it exhausted itself, so that her soul was ravaged by her emotions that chased one another a little like wild beasts—devouring her strength, devastating her peace. . . . Nor could she leash them, nor could she cast them out, for her mind would not work. She lay sodden, a victim.

A picture of Hugh resting exhausted on his bed, in anguish, like herself, filled her with a restless yearning for him that finally drove her up. She rose. She rose more tired than when she had lain down; pale and feverish. She had herself dressed in her golden gown, the one in which she had looked to him like a fairy; a good fairy, he had said; she forgot that she had ever before worn it, so completely had its connection with him transformed it. She wore her diamonds; they scintillated just like her eyes, she thought, when she saw herself in the glass, and both scintillated like champagne. Champagne . . . here was a suggestion—She ordered a bottle of champagne, and when it came, she at once drank a glass. As she drank she felt vaguely reminiscent, and she felt a sense of gratitude to this little glass of stuff that flowed into one like a little draft of unconsciousness . . . or at least of peace. . . .

She then sat by the fire, waiting for him.

He would enter, she foresaw, with his worshipful expression . . . the expression that kept her in chains at this frightful cost.—He would have changed his shirt, perhaps his suit. It might no longer even be the grey homespun she knew—that her fingers

Love Days

had caressed, that had brought the pulsation of his heart to them. There would be only the same head—the same face, eyes, the mouth, which was forbidden, and since it was forbidden, was smiling. How could he smile, how could he smile! Where did he derive the strength from.— For he loved her.— She closed her eyes and relived once more those moments of supreme rapture he had given her in his passionate, his desperate embrace; and she smiled a queer smile like one about to die. . . . He had made her so, so happy, if even for a moment only,—what could she do other than try to make him happy . . . try to be as he wished her to be. . . . Yes, she would try, really try, the impossible. Since he wished it, perhaps the impossible could happen. She would somehow shrink into the disjointed, detached creature she was before she loved him, and then they might weave thin superficial ties from one to the other. . . . If she did not go mad in the inane process.

When Hugh came, Susanna was for the moment in her bedroom.

Before entering the salon she followed an impulse and looked through the curtains at him. He was standing opposite to her leaning against the back of a chair. He wore evening clothes, and in these new coverings she suddenly saw him freshly again. She saw again newly his youth, his frailty, his clumsy, unconscious grace, his old weariness of eyes and brow, and on his lips a new suffering resigned hopelessness.

Susanna fell back from the door:—this dreadful conscious pain—this was what she, Susanna, had to chase away by hiding her love, her yearning clamouring love— Was it possible, was it actual that this was happening to her, Susanna! Yes . . . yes . . . and with the “yes” still ringing in her heart, she quickly went in to him.

“All dressed up, as you see, in your especial style, friend Hugh.” She laughed a little, giving him her hand.

“The same as when we first met; thank you—beloved Susanna.” His eyes rested on her with the sweetest gratitude.

“I tried to get you some flowers,” he continued, “but there wasn’t a chance tonight in this hole, it seems—”

“What would you have brought me—what kind?” she inquired, as she seated herself.

Susanna Moore's

"I know exactly what I should want you to have, but I shan't tell you."

"Why not?"

"I shan't tell you now. I shall send them tomorrow if I can get them at St. Moritz; if not, some other time. But I've brought you something else, if you'll honour me by accepting it—" He flushed.

"That depends," Susanna retorted lightly. "If it's an English bangle I don't think I possibly can; for anything else I suppose I could summon up a deceptive enthusiasm;—what is it?"

But here Mrs. Collins joined them, and after a short time dinner was brought, and arranged, and finally served, with all its attendant clatter.

During dinner they conversed much as they had conversed at their last dinner little more than a week ago,—about the surface of anything and everything, but, with Mrs. Collins at the helm, chiefly after all about people and places. Her third subject, cases, was successfully evaded by Hugh.— Susanna drank several glasses of champagne, was amiable, talked a little nonsense, laughed a little, and looked at Hugh whenever he was not noticing, and looked vacant and smiling when he was.

It was over half a year now, she reflected, since she had dined in a home of her own, graciously, pleasantly. . . . She began to picture Hugh in her study. . . . No, it did not seem a sufficiently permanent setting. . . . It was easier to think of themselves in some place in the country: in his place; yes, in his own place. . . . Susanna half closed her eyes and pursued her vision;—a blush of pure delight rose to her cheeks.

"How well Mrs. Moore looks tonight, don't you think so, Doctor?" Mrs. Collins remarked with gratification.

Hugh looked at Susanna in his new, enraptured way. "Yes, yes; it's wonderful."

Susanna's blush turned into a flush of embarrassment; the complete falseness of the situation confused her again. "It's the earrings," she murmured.

Mrs. Collins left them to themselves after the vestiges of dinner had been removed.— It seemed to Susanna after that as though the audience that was making the artificial performance

Love Days

seem natural had left, and the performance was nevertheless continuing with a frightening grotesqueness.

"And where is my present?" she asked after a while.

"I feel rather a fool," he answered boyishly, laughing a little, and fumbling in his pocket. "The fact is I'd rather give it to you just before I go—You see it's a picture of me I happened to have with me, because I meant to give it to Mrs. Dickinson, my house-keeper, to put away—it's my mother's locket, rather a jolly locket—and then it quite escaped my memory, and I found it in my pocket.— So if you'll have it, Susanna, it would be so very nice for it to be so near to you.— Will you, Susanna?"

"If it is like you, if it is you;—let me see it."

"It's me ten years ago, just before my mother died and I fell ill. Of course I'm a young chap on it."

She held out her hand.

"No, you shan't have it until I know what I am to have in return."

"I have no picture with me, no photograph, no drawing,—nothing."

The thought of the last picture made of her by Grodz flashed through her mind, and suddenly she hated it; and hated him for having been in her life at all; and hated everything connected with them;—with him and his having remained a memory. She turned from the thought of it all with loathing.

"What is it, Susanna dearest?" he asked, half rising. "You look distressed."

He was seated opposite to her, on a cushion; they were before the lighted fire, and there was a ruddy glow on his face, painting it with health. She looked down on him absently, and said calmly: "I've nothing with me—I'll send for a photograph, my last—quite a nice one, commonplace, but like me, and nice. Or I'll have one taken in St. Moritz; how would that be, for the time being? Or we might have one taken together, like—I'd like one of you as you are, you know, not as a boy. You wouldn't want mine as an eighteen year old girl either, would you?"

"I think I should," he replied; "you cannot have been so very different."

"But I was, I was." Susanna stared into space:—everything seemed so unreal tonight, that even the fact of a real past seemed unreal.

Susanna Moore's

"Tell me about your eighteen year old self, Susanna dearest; there's nothing I don't want to know about you, to love and rejoice in. Tell me dearest, it will help us."

"Will it?" she asked stupidly.

"Yes, beloved Susanna."

Susanna pulled herself together painfully. She gathered in her distraught forces. He had said it would help—he was there opposite, quite near, self-controlled, almost content, it seemed; telling her what to do. She would do it; that was all there was to do.—

She started on her recital. She began to tell him of her college days; her home with her aunt; her travels; her studies; her occupations; her—studies; her travels. She had a queer obsessing feeling that every sentence was carrying her farther from him, instead of nearer.— What was she saying any how? . . . She heard herself saying: "And then I went to" "And then we went to" "And after that sometime I went to"—

Was she a little delirious, she wondered, going on talking like this and hardly knowing what she was saying?— All she really knew was that what he wanted to know about her and she about him should be whispered with arms about each other in the dark. . . .

"And then I went to—" she heard herself saying again, and suddenly her control snapped, and she burst into hysterical laughter—

Hugh jumped to his feet. "Susanna, Susanna, what is it, speak to me!"

Susanna's laughter turned to sobbing, and the sobbing had a dreadful warning sound that reached her heart where terror lest she lose him reigned; and with a supreme effort she controlled herself.

"Nothing, nothing," she said as she rose. She felt herself swaying. "I'm often like this,—light. It means nothing, nothing at all—really!" She lost her balance and fell against him. "Nothing," she murmured as she felt him queerly slipping and sliding away.

"Susanna," she heard from far off and some word—sounds; and then everything retreated and vanished and great spaces of nothingness closed in on her.

When she came to, Susanna found herself in bed, with Mrs. Collins and Hugh bending over her. She was shoving a glass

Love Days

that smelled of whiskey from her. The window was open, her ermine cover was over her, and at her feet she felt the heat of a hot water bag.

She smiled at Mrs. Collins and at Hugh, who was now standing at the foot of the bed, looking grey and stony.

"Put on your coat, Hugh," she whispered, "its cold in here."

He looked about for the coat he did not have with him, obediently; and not seeing it, he looked back again at Susanna with his desperate stony look.

"What happened?" Susanna asked Mrs. Collins.

"You fainted, dear; the room was overheated, anyway, and you sat close to the fire.—But you've come to nicely and quickly, and you mustn't exert yourself talking, dear."

"I feel dazed, doped—You've given me a lot of whiskey—I fainted—how amusing—I've always wanted to faint—I've been so near to it so often and it never came off before— Now I know what it's like. I like it—immensely—really. I feel much better, much, much better—nice and languid and slothful and pleasant and indifferent—like a snail—" She wondered why this sounded so new and yet so oddly familiar. "Hugh, come here!" She smiled easily with her childish smile.

He came to the side of her bed. She saw how he looked. "Have you had some whiskey too? No? Mrs. Collins, make him take it, please."

"She's right; it would do you good." He nodded and drank some.

"And put something over his shoulders, please."

He stood in complete immobility, dazed. Mrs. Collins got him a shawl. "Oh, thank you, thank you so very much." He took it from her and put it on a chair.

"Put it on, Hugh, immediately, Hugh, or I'll send you out of this cold room."

He put it on, and it dropped from his shoulders. Again he stood staring at her.

Susanna's heart took fright. "Mrs. Collins, dear, I'm feeling strong and fine;—will you leave us for a moment. For just five or ten minutes; I have something to say to the Doctor;— leave the door open, if you're worried about me."

Mrs. Collins was worried, noticeably; but this situation, she

Susanna Moore's

felt, was beyond her, and since Susanna was so reasonable now. . . .

"Very well," she agreed; "but no longer. The Doctor will know how to take care of you." But she cast an astonished and doubtful glance at him, as she left the room.

Hugh fell on his knees and buried his head in the hollow of Susanna's arm,—shaken by sobs.

"I played you a nasty trick, Hugh my darling," Susanna said calmly, stroking his hair. "I played you a nasty trick. I had all the fun of having everything blotted out, and now a great peace in my heart, and you had all the anguish. . . . A nasty trick. . . . I won't do it again, I promise you . . . since it's you who suffered. I can see how you suffered in your dear eyes and your dear—But everything that is yours is inexpressibly dear to me, and I cannot bear to see you suffer through me. We must find a way . . . we shall find a way . . . since we love one another as we do; since we are willing to die for one another, there must be a way in which we can live for one another—and be happy—not suffer like this, as you are suffering. I'm not suffering, not now; Hugh darling, lift your head and look at me; you will see."

He lifted his head—; she smiled at him happily, deliciously, dimpling.

"Susanna, Susanna," he murmured, "I thought I had killed you."

"Lay your head on my breast for a moment, my love, and you will know that nothing at all matters but that we love one another and the world is beautiful. . . ."

He laid his head on her breast and clasped his arms about her; she held his face, turned from her, in her hands, and kissed his hair.

"Susanna," he murmured brokenly, "beautiful Susanna, my darling love—"

"Tell me you love me, Hugh."

"I love you," he murmured with lips on her heart, "unutterably—too much."

There was a long moment, and then they released one another.

"One cannot love too much," Susanna chanted with a voice coloured by the bliss in her heart. "You are mine again and I am yours—things will form themselves, my beloved; they must.

Love Days

Promise me that you will sleep happily, as I shall. I shall sleep happily with your dear head on my breast,—my love; Hugh, my love.” She took his hand and kissed it. “Because you will not kiss me, and because I worship you.” She smiled; she smiled the smile of complete beatitude.

Hugh rose and held her hand to his heart, gazing at her, and his face was the face of a man seeing death.

“Smile, my love,” Susanna begged.

He tried to smile; he could not.

“Goodnight, beloved,” he faltered, as he turned and left.

WHENEVER Susanna opened her eyes during the night, they encountered in the shades of night Mrs. Collins' substantial form, dozing and yet not sleeping, in an armchair next to the bed, where her professional conscience had installed her, and held her. At Susanna's slightest motion Mrs. Collins' dozing and yet not sleeping eyes opened, as Susanna observed; opened fully and unerringly on her, Susanna, in some uncanny way, like searchlights that find without searching.

This professional Mrs. Collins of the night, with eyes opening and closing in this admirable, professional, and so grotesque manner was apparently much more difficult to ignore than the private Mrs. Collins of the daytime with orbs pleasantly and vaguely straggling, for Susanna, upon her impacts with her, invariably gave up the attempt, gave up pretending to be alone with her sense of Hugh, and found it necessary to turn her back on Mrs. Collins and get rid of her in the oblivion of sleep.— Until she awakened again, and again tossed over, and again found Mrs. Collins' unblinking sleepy gaze upon her, and tossed back again, and again fell into fitful sleep.—

And so the night passed.

Towards morning Susanna fell into deep slumber, from which she awakened late in the forenoon to another cold, blue and glittering day. And she awakened refreshed, and full of vague hope.

Again she lay in bed near an open window, wrapped in furs, looking out into the light. This day she saw green and white hills, and, beyond, the blue and white mountain peaks piercing into a hard bright sky. And instead of a dreary empty world she saw a dramatic, wonderful and exciting world waiting to be transformed into pure beauty. She looked forward vaguely to beatitude; vaguely, for the detail of her future was blurred.

But the main thing, she told herself, was that the torture of last night which her swoon had terminated, was over, definitely over. He knew now the limits of her strength; he knew now that,

Love Days

whether happily or unhappily, they loved, and had to face the fact that they loved. The torturing make-believe was over, thank God!— She looked back with sickening distaste to the shallow calm into which he had directed her; to the distance from him that she had tried to observe; to their vapid half-conscious talk. She looked back, and she thought to see that in every moment of this false contact he had actually been slipping from her, she had been losing him a little; losing her sense of him; almost losing her love for him a little; and that soon she would have lost her sense of herself,—her sanity. Her very body had protested against the pretence that he was anything but all to her, and had slipped away into nothingness. And he had realized it, and it had broken him like that,—last night. But he knew now that she had not the strength he imputed to her; he knew that she could not do without him, even if she would;—even if her spirit were ready to suffer anything his spirit demanded, her body could not be coerced:—it revolted, and would continue to revolt. . . . He knew now; and he would have to accommodate his spirit to that knowledge and think of some method of reconciliation. The fact that he might harm her physically if he loved her, was now confronted by the fact that he would surely destroy her if he did not love her. He now knew this, and he would think of some way out—if he would not accept her way.

And whatever he decided and thought right would be right, and beautiful, because he was right and beautiful. And because he was so perfect she worshipped him and loved him and could do with no less of him than all. And he loved her: she felt it in his embrace, in the desperate fervour of his embrace, in the quality that gave to it a little of the depth and reality and taste of death. And because he loved her as she loved him, her love could overcome his doubts and his suffering, stamp it out with the happiness they would share in their love. . . . If two persons were willing to die for their love,—after all was there anything more to be said or considered? . . .

Susanna lay in bed, looking out into the bright air, feeling weak, but vaguely hopeful.

Where was he now? How had he passed the night? Was he out walking, near his mountains, thinking of her; or was he tired? Should she send Jeanne to find out? Dreadful that there were no

Susanna Moore's

telephones in this house.— Mrs. Collins, too, might as well know how things were going to be; for she would no longer conceal, nor compromise. Mrs. Collins could go then, if it did not suit her professional sensibilities as chaperon. Because she would have him with her all the time—whenever they desired to see one another, and she, at least, desired to see him constantly. She could hardly think, feel or act without reference to him; everything that happened or was begun seemed incomplete unless it terminated somehow in him, in something connecting with him. Every fancy or thought that came to her came on a platter, as it were, clamouring to be presented to him for his acquaintance. Every sense of hers seemed automatic when he was absent; life returned to her eyes and ears and skin only with his physical presence. Her motions felt futile, her arms felt empty, her whole body felt raw, horribly raw, a little as unprotected bodies might feel if exposed to unwonted roughness of the elements. Without him she felt frustrated; she felt physically incomplete; she felt wounded and unhealed—. She endured his physical absence only because he was physically near at hand, and she endured it with pain.

She rang the bell by her bed for Jeanne; she would have her find out somehow where he was, and if he was in the hotel and rested, she might perhaps bring him here; it was already past eleven.

Jeanne came in. "I was about to come, Madame, with this little package and letter for Madame." She handed them to Susanna.

Susanna recognized Hugh's writing. She dismissed Jeanne, and when she had left, kissed the letter and opened the package. It contained the locket he had brought last night. Susanna opened it lingeringly, and looked long at his picture: a young strong beautiful Hugh with an unclouded brow and untroubled, shy eyes. A dear, a sweet boy; but not her Hugh, gentle, suffering, strong . . . her Hugh, her deep and unplumbed and unloved Hugh . . . her Hugh, through whom she lived, who would take her to him, and make her beautiful like himself. . . .

She tore open his letter. She began to read, and from the first, as she read, she saw herself with a strange definiteness, and felt

Love Days

herself with a strange definiteness leaning over his shoulder as he penned this letter, one of her hands stroking his hair, the other pressing, spread out, against his beating heart,—as yesterday.

And during its perusal this vision and this feeling grew more and more intense and real and heavy with reality. It brought hot tears to her eyes; her heart beat with the excitement that his heart seemed to communicate to her physically. She was one with him in his distraction and his agony and the pain of his renunciation. She was inseparable from him in a surge of deep and complete sympathy.

He had written:

Susanna, I am about to steal away from you like a thief in the night, after having like a thief stolen your heart. I am leaving with you mine, and my soul and my mind—I am taking my miserable body away where it cannot harm you. Read these words with the help of your love, for I am distraught, Susanna; I am endeavoring to put into words what is in me, so that your pity will flow over me and ease my desperate pain. But I hardly know what I say, what is passing in my soul. I am certain only that I am constantly conscious of your lifeless body in my arms, and the stricken sense of having hurt you, and that I could never hold up my head again, nor indeed breathe again, if I were to expose you again to my incredible brutality. And I find myself constantly conscious of your lips and your breast yielding to me, and of my incredible weakness.— For one like me there remains nothing but flight—elimination. I should long ago have rid you of myself—when first I fell in love with you—, but I did not dream that your so resplendent self could even look at me otherwise than in pity— I am so remote from the fulness of life, Susanna, that I no longer knew what a generous splendid magnificent love might be: I received yours with incredulity and pain.

Susanna, Susanna, beloved Susanna, it is because you are what you are that you can offer yourself so splendidly, that you can offer to die for the fulfilment of our love; it is because I am what I am, half consigned to the realms of death already that I cannot accept. I cannot take, take, take, and give so miserably; I cannot take your splendour, your beauty and richness, your incredible love, your health and perhaps your life—I cannot. I am, compared to you, so shabby, so ill, so pitiable with my few shreds of philosophy and my so meagre consolations;—I am reduced to so

Susanna Moore's

little, that I cannot think otherwise of our love than in terms of exchange. That is why it seems to me that I have stolen your heart although you have had mine from the beginning. Just having thrown it at your feet, Susanna, my love, do you understand? had given me divine consolation, divine appeasement, had made me divinely happy. . . . And I cannot accept yours, I dare not—I was quite certain when I held you in my arms and thought I might have killed you. I cannot remain in your presence: I knew this when you held me to your breast and tried to console me and I cursed the day I was born.

I love you utterly, Susanna. I shall never again feel alone in the world. The world has become a different world, one in which miracles happen, miracles of cruelty and miracles of beauty. I shall write to you every day while I am fit, unless you tell me to stop. Whenever you write to me you will have made me the gift of a little more life and light and beauty. And happiness. I consign to your care my soul, my heart, all but my miserable body.

To my beloved—
Hugh.

Susanna's tears ran down her cheeks; her throat tightened with unspent sobs; her heart was swollen unendurably; she felt Hugh in every fibre of her being, her pity, love, adoration flooded over him. She gazed, quivering, into the bright sky with wide blinded eyes.

And then she became conscious of a compelling sense that she must immediately return to the letter, that it contained something she had overlooked, something important which her mind must grasp.

She took the letter up again, frightened; and read it again slowly, wiping the tears from her eyes to see. She read it slowly, and, as she read, slowly there rose up from it, like the mists from a mountain lake, its tragic significance,—its meaning for her. Until, finally, she was encompassed, enveloped, shut in by the knowledge that, quite simply, she had lost him forever.

She looked out again into the bright noon; into these bright spaces of earth— Suddenly she knew that they were void of him. —*These* spaces, and *all* spaces in which she would find herself—ever—would always form a great void about her— Wherever she would be in the world there would be this void around her;

Love Days

wherever she moved this void would move along with her, around her. These fluttering pages would be all there remained of life for her in the void, since his miserable body, his lips, his hair, his throat, his eyes, his hands, his arms, his clothes, his beating heart, his body,—himself—the living self she longed for and burned for—, was lost. . . .

Susanna sat up suddenly and clapped her hands over her eyes and mouth, and held her breath.— Then she fell heavily back, unconscious.

Redwood Library

SELECTIONS FROM THE RULES

1. Three volumes may be taken at a time and only three on one share. Two unbound numbers of a monthly and three numbers of a weekly publication are counted as a volume.

2. Books other than 7-day and 14-day ones may be kept out 28 days. **Books cannot be renewed or transferred.**

3. Books overdue are subject to a fine of one cent a day for fourteen days, **and five cents a day for each day thereafter.**

4. Neglect to pay the fine will debar from the use of the Library.

5. No book is to be lent out of the house of the person to whom it is charged.

6. Any person who shall soil (deface) or damage or lose a book belonging to the Library shall be liable to such fine as the Directors may impose; or shall pay the value of the book or of the set, if it be a part of a set, as the Directors may elect. All scribbling or any marking or writing whatever, folding or turning down the leaves, as well as cutting or tearing any matter from a book belonging to the Library, will be considered defacement and damage.

JUN 28 1924

bW.W28857

MAY 19 1924 NOV 3 1947

JUL 26 1924 SEP 8 1958

MAY 30 1924

AUG 6 1924

JUN 13 1924

MAY 13 1924

AUG 21 1924

SEP 19 1924

SEP 29 1924

OCT 11

OCT 10 1924

OCT 21 1924

OCT 24 1924

NOV 1 1924

NOV 11 1924

NOV 21 1924

DEC 1 1924

DEC 19 1924

JAN 1 1925

FEB 1 1925

MAR 1 1925

APR 1 1925

MAY 1 1925

JUN 1 1925

JUL 1 1925

AUG 1 1925

SEP 1 1925

OCT 1 1925

NOV 1 1925

DEC 1 1925

WITHDRAWN

JUN 20 1931

MAR 24 '33

MAY 7 1947

Q R2
435 OCIC H.N. E.D.

